

THE STATUTES
OF THE
SCHOOL OF NISIBIS

EDITED, TRANSLATED AND FURNISHED
WITH A COMMENTARY

BY

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ETSE

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PREFACE

In all the history of spiritual and intellectual culture of the Syrian Orient, there are few pages as charming as those which testify to the vigor, spiritual power, intellectual energy, creative puissance and strength of enrichment which became manifest in the School of Nisibis, able to enliven Christian thought and action. Since my first acquaintance with this institution I have felt its impact. Its attraction was too powerful. I had to return to it again and again. So also greater plans were generated and have ripened during the decades, the fruits of which I hope to present in the near future. This is a comprehensive study devoted to this institution and its contribution to the spiritual treasury of the Syrian Orient.

In connection with this greater project it was necessary to collect the manuscript evidence, in this way carrying out systematic and extensive preparation at the very foundations. In this undertaking special attention was given to documents which emanated from the School of Nisibis itself. Determined to increase the bulk of the manuscript evidence, patient search for codices led me repeatedly on long journeys to remote areas where the manuscripts have found their hiding-places.

Everything possible has been done to trace the manuscript evidence. I am grateful that this could be done. Through these lines I extend my thanks to all who have given permission to use their manuscript resources. With deep gratitude I think of the kindness and hospitality which I have experienced in these places in Europe and the Orient.

The completion of this manuscript research and the termination of the preparation of this work for edition would not have been possible without a scholarship granted to me by the American Council of Learned Societies. Through these pages I express my deep gratitude for all the encouragement and help.

June, 1961.

A. VÖÖBUS.

INTRODUCTION

Unusual importance attaches to the texts edited and translated on the following pages. Whenever the history of culture of the Syrian Orient is written, an important place will be given to the contribution that emanated from the center of learning to which the Syrians under the Persian rule have looked with great pride and sense of reverence. This is the School of Nisibis. When, as a result of the doctrinal quarrels, the light had to go out in the School of Edessa, it was destined to become a prelude to another institution. The torch of learning was carried beyond the Byzantine border and set up in the closest town at the frontier, namely Nisibis. For centuries until it was finally annexed by the Persians Nisibis had been a place of pride in the Eastern provinces of the Byzantium. Now, once again its past was enlivened by the impulses it received from the spiritual resources from which it had been separated.

Soon after its foundation, the School of Nisibis embarked on a course of rapid progress, aided by an accumulation of favorable factors and advantageous circumstances, absorbing the best elements in the educational field in the Syrian realm of that time, and so assuming the place of preeminence among the schools of Eastern Syria.

While nothing has survived of the original sources connected with the regulation of work and life in the School of Edessa, which would help us to look inside its operation, good fortune has preserved even several documents which emanate from the School of Nisibis itself. These documents even include the statutes of the institution. Thus, these are of an unusual nature and importance from the angle of the history of spiritual culture and literature. They lead us inside the precincts of the school, into its administration, classroom situation and life within the walls of the institution. Moreover, indirectly they also permit us to see a reflection of the pattern of life and work in the School of Edessa since these statutes grew out from the practice and traditions kept in the School of Edessa. Furthermore among documents in the genre of directives and rules given to the schools, they occupy a unique place.

When it is realized that the School of Nisibis was a unique center of higher learning and that it has played such an extraordinary role in the history of spiritual and intellectual culture, that, in fact, it must be considered the only institution of its kind, the value of these statutes becomes greatly enhanced.

I have purposely translated the original as literally as possible in order to retain something of the flavor of the Syriac texts. Those who are well versed in Syriac do not need a translation but others who are not familiar with this language will appreciate a closer contact with the original of the document.

PART I
PROLEGOMENA

I

THE FOUNDING OF THE SCHOOL OF NISIBIS

Among all the schools of the Eastern Syrians there was one which claimed to be the *universitas litterarum*. This was the school located in Nisibis, which as the pride and honor of the Byzantium, since 361 had been annexed by the Persians. As a unique establishment among other foci of spiritual and intellectual life, this school has played a particular role in the history of intellectual culture of the Syrian Christianity. It was destined to reach an extraordinary élan. Immediately after it appeared on the scene, it became an extraordinarily important source of inspiration and strength for spiritual renewal. Viewing the life as a whole in its manifoldness, as unfolded by the Eastern Syrian Christianity, its part is, indeed, structural.

1. CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH LED TO THE FOUNDING

The circumstances which led to the founding of the School of Nisibis stand in relation to the difficulties and hardships that befell the School of Edessa and developed so far that the situation became unbearable there. Finally they led to the liquidation of the School of Edessa.

However, the events leading up to the foundation are enveloped in fog. The line between historical truth and legend is often blurred. To be sure, the sources which stem from the School of Nisibis, embedded in the works of Barḥadbešabbā¹ and Barḥadbešabbā of Ḥolwān², report in detail³ about the circumstances preceding the birth of the new school. They tell that after his final departure from Edessa Narsai crossed the Persian border, planning to journey

¹ *Histoire*, ed. NAU, p. 599 ff.

² *Fondation*, ed. SCHER, p. 383 f.

³ The circumstances in connection

with the departure from Edessa are only very briefly mentioned by Barḥadbešabbā, *ibid.*, p. 384.

into inner Persia. He came to Nisibis, stopping off at a monastery. It is then recorded when Barṣaumā, the bishop of Nisibis, learned of Narsai's presence, he removed him therefrom, brought him into the city to the accompaniment of a reception of honor. This action had a farreaching effect : he persuaded Narsai to stay in Nisibis and won him for his project to establish a great school there.

In these sources we are told this and that and several things at greater length, yet clarity is absent. Moreover not everything is to be trusted. It is obvious that tendentious influences have made inroads and the factual situation is blurred. One tendency is apparent : to retouch the portrait of Barṣaumā, putting a brighter halo around his head. A more realistic account is preserved elsewhere — a chapter in the Chronicle of Seert⁴. It affirms Narsai did not plan to journey beyond Nisibis — quite the contrary. Further, in seeking an opportunity to settle there and continue his activity, he was offered and accepted leadership of a small school founded by a certain Šem'ōn⁵. Later — after initial success? — Barṣaumā became interested and took matters into his own hands. This report is interesting and provides a hint that there was a more realistic pre-history. It seems to point to a modest beginning before plans were laid for a grandiose project. It also implies that the alleged and eulogized power of clairvoyance and vision on the part of Barṣaumā must be heavily reduced. It did not happen as suddenly as other sources want us to believe. This narrative in brief inspires more trust at several points⁶.

However it may have been at the inception of the project, in any case the estimate of the situation was correct in recognizing the potential importance of the refugee director for the future of Nisibis and Christianity in Persia⁷.

Barḥadbešabbā claims to record the steps undertaken for the establishment of the School of Nisibis. Action required moved in

⁴ *Histoire nestorienne*, ed. SCHER, VII, p. 114.

⁵ Šem'ōn Garmqaiā, i.e. Šem'ōn of Bēt Garmai.

⁶ Contrary to this source the handling of the question of the school

of Šem'ōn in Barḥadbešabbā's report, *Histoire*, ed. NAU, p. 608, is somewhat puzzling.

⁷ See the deliberations *ibid.*, p. 606-608, and in Barḥadbešabbā, *Fondation*, ed. SCHER, p. 384-386.

several directions⁸: the acquirement of physical facilities, the establishment of the constituency of the community of the school and legislation for the institution. A new site and building were purchased for this purpose. Its location was in the vicinity of the church⁹. Barṣaumā is reported to have taken care of the establishment of the first constituency of the school by reorganizing the educational work in Nisibis. We are told that an already existing school was merged with the new one¹⁰. Finally Barṣaumā undertook steps to foster the consolidation of life and discipline in the new community, namely by legislation¹¹.

The newly founded institution was able to begin its operation vigorously from the very beginning. The premises were as excellent as could be. Its model was the Alma Mater in Edessa¹². Thus the image of the new school was already concrete, its shape already tested. The development of the new school was laid into the experienced hands of Narsai who had been a director in the School of Edessa for a long time. All the experiences in teaching and administration acquired there could be put into effect here. Further Narsai's reputation, renown and fame became an inestimable asset which must have manifested itself very soon, attracting a considerable part of the staff of teachers who had been Narsai's co-workers in Edessa. This must also have had its impact upon the pupils. In fact, that the greater part of the community of Edessa joined the new school, is reported by Barḥadbešabbā of Holwān¹³.

2. THE CHRONOLOGICAL PROBLEM

The tradition devolving upon the chronological question as to the departure of Narsai from Edessa is very tangled. As a result, the scholars have been divided about the time when the exodus

⁸ This part is very brief in BARHADBEŠABBĀ, *ibid.*, p. 386.

⁹ BARHADBEŠABBĀ, *Histoire*, ed. NAU, p. 608.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 609. Here Šemʿōn appears as an interpreter of Kaškar.

¹¹ See page 57.

¹² The proem to the statutes speaks of the School of Nisibis as a transplantation of the School of Edessa into a new location, see page 47. See also SŪRĪN, *Mēmra*, ed. SCHER, p. 400.

¹³ *Fondation*, ed. SCHER, p. 386.

of the teachers and students of Antiochian convictions left Edessa. Duval¹⁴ and Wright¹⁵ accepted the year 489 for this event. When Chabot published the first study on this subject 66 years ago, he proposed the year 489 as the date¹⁶. Labourt took it over¹⁷. A bit later Nelz writing his work on the schools in the Orient came to the same conclusion¹⁸.

A rival position has pushed aside these proposals. Duval¹⁹ argued that this exodus took place in 457 A.D. Mingana²⁰, Scher²¹, Hermann²², Baumstark²³, Hayes²⁴, Chabot²⁵, Leclercq²⁶ and Ortiz de Urbina²⁷ followed suit.

Both of these views have appealed to the support in the sources, which were marshalled behind each of these positions.

According to one source, the blow which ended the School of Edessa struck 'after' the death of Hībā, who died in 457. That is the tradition which emerges from the Chronicle of Arbēl by Mešihāzekā²⁸. It testifies that when Hībā died, the fate of the School of Edessa was sealed. Narsai and his colleagues were expelled from Edessa. This is the way how the text has been understood. However, it is not absolutely clear what the span is behind the remark: 'after his (i.e. Hībā's) death'. This might refer in a general way to a longer period²⁹.

There is a group of texts which gives quite a different answer

¹⁴ *Histoire d'Édesse*, p. 432.

¹⁵ *Syriac Literature*, p. 58.

¹⁶ *L'École de Nisibe*, p. 46.

¹⁷ *Christianisme dans l'empire perse*, p. 138, 141.

¹⁸ *Theologische Schulen*, p. 79.

¹⁹ *Littérature syriaque*, p. 344, 346.

²⁰ NARSAI, *Homiliae et carmina*, I, *Introductio*, p. 7.

²¹ *Écrivains syriens*, p. 6. He was so certain that in BARHADBEŠABBĀ, *Histoire*, p. 600, he wanted to correct the source in the interest of this view, see p. 600, footnote 1 and p. 603, footnote 1.

²² *Schule von Nisibis*, p. 115.

²³ *Geschichte syrischer Literatur*, p.

104; cf. *Syrische Literatur*, p. 179.

BARDENHEWER, *Geschichte altk. Literatur*, IV, p. 407 followed his views.

²⁴ *École d'Édesse*, p. 208, 214.

²⁵ *Littérature syriaque*, p. 50.

²⁶ *École de Nisibe*, col. 1378.

²⁷ *Patrologia syriaca*, p. 108.

²⁸ *Sources syriaques*, ed. MINGANA, p. 66.

²⁹ Such a possibility becomes particularly feasible if we take into account the fact that the rule of 'Abbušṭā, bishop of Arbēl, lasted from about 450 till 498 according to the chronological calculations, cf. SACHAU, *Chronik von Arbela*, p. 17.

to the chronological side of the question. In its earliest form this tradition emerges in the letter of Šem'ōn of Bēt Aršam. In the hardships and difficulties that struck the School of Edessa after the death of Hībā. Then it tells that the man who determined to resolve the situation definitively, was the man who succeeded Nūnā upon the latter's death — Bishop Qūrā. According to this account the expulsion of the teachers coincided with the liquidation of the school³⁰. Šem'ōn's testimony regarding the period of Qūrā as the time of Narsai's departure, is not the only voice that speaks in this way. There are others which rescue it from isolation. That Mari supports the same tradition may not mean very much³¹. But when this testimony also occurs in the work of one who draws upon the traditions of the School of Nisibis, namely Barḥadbešabbā of the School of Nisibis³², then it is not easy to push it aside in this way as it sometimes has been done.

At least one recognition dawns upon us. Confronted with such a contradictory state in our sources, it can by no means be certain that we have a right guide in following the Chronicle of Arbēl. As this constellation of the sources shows a circumspect approach in this intricate matter is more than justified.

3. THE SOLUTION OF THE CHRONOLOGICAL PROBLEM

If our decision for the final outcome is to be based upon the factors considered up to this point and arguments which have been used by the scholars, in the context of such a tangled situation we are less than eager to make any choice whatsoever. What are needed are criteria which can be used for judgement. Indeed, the

³⁰ *Epistola*, ed. ASSEMANI, p. 353. However his report is not free from some flaws. Šem'ōn is certainly wrong when he tells us of the return of Barṣaumā as a result of this action that took place in 489. The truth is that Barṣaumā must have left the School of Edessa and returned much earlier. The tradition that this took place in 435, Ms. Vat. syr. 520, fol. 41 b, is

certainly wrong, since in 449 he still was in Edessa, *Akten Ephes. Synode*, p. 26. That Barṣaumā was already bishop of Nisibis before Narsai returned, is shown by our document, see page 47.

³¹ *De patriarchis nest.*, ed. GISMONDI, p. 44.

³² *Histoire*, ed. NAU, p. 599 ff.; see VÖÖBUS, *School of Nisibis*, II, 3.

sifting of all available texts and traditions yields some items which bear upon our problem and carry some weight affecting our final estimate of the situation. First, a critical attempt to remove what looks like varnish from the sources enables us to see a tendency of stretching the number of years in Narsai's activity and to push them to phantastic limits³³. Secondly, in regard to the chronology of Narsai's life, the only date which is historically reliable is the year 496 A.D. In that year he was still director of the School of Nisibis, as the text edited on the following pages, shows³⁴. However, this only reliable date can tell us very much. In itself, this date makes it most unlikely that Narsai's departure from Edessa could have happened in 457, antecedent to which he was in the office of the director for 20 years³⁵.

This much has been gleaned from history despite the legends so intricately embedded in it. All we can now see from this perspective points to the fact, that the tradition relative to Narsai's departure in 457 cannot be taken seriously at all³⁶.

Does this mean that we are now ready to fall into the arms of those who have maintained the year 489 as the date of Narsai's departure? We are not yet ready for this. This would be premature. The same circumspection which has led our steps up to now should guide us for the rest of our way of investigation.

The hope to find some reliable clues and direction in the scrutiny of the texts³⁷ does not fail. Indeed, here we can invoke a criterion of judgement, and this opens new vistas for our pathway. Namely in the traditions kept in the School of Nisibis there are elements which intrinsically display such evidence so as to make any conclusion other than historical reliability impossible. These we find in the records regarding the circumstances in connection with Narsai's departure³⁸. We do well to pay special attention to some

³³ See the full analysis, *ibid.*, II, 3.

³⁴ See page 55, 59.

³⁵ BARHADBEŠABBĀ, *Histoire*, ed. NAU, p. 599; BARHADBEŠABBĀ, *Fondation*, ed. SCHER, p. 383. Cf. Ms. Šarf. Patr. 80, fol. 28 b.

³⁶ There are still other considerations that come into account, partic-

ularly Narsai's contact with Ja'qōb of Sarūg and its impact upon Narsai's literary creation, see VÖÖBUS, *School of Nisibis*, chapter III, 3.

³⁷ See the full treatment *ibid.*, chapter III, 3.

³⁸ BARHADBEŠABBĀ, *Histoire*, ed. NAU, p. 599 ff.

unpleasant and bitter feelings and painful sentiments among Narsai's friends after his precipitate flight from Edessa, which made it necessary to defend Narsai's action³⁹. These features are particularly important for our inquiry owing to their quality⁴⁰. No one would defend somebody who was not actually attacked by criticism. Furthermore, such matters reflecting painful memories could never have been invented. Thus, indications are as clear as can be that in the midst of quicksands here we are standing upon historical ground. This we use as a point of departure. And as soon as we proceed we note an advance : the mise-en-scène of the departure of Narsai is set out with the utmost clearness. His departure came unexpectedly and he left Edessa alone⁴¹. Such a picture is confirmed by another source of the same quarters⁴². It seems that there is even a third independent avenue to the same tradition⁴³. All these conditions and circumstances which are conjured up in these reports are entirely different from the circumstances that were caused by the liquidation of the School of Edessa in 489⁴⁴ for which action Bishop Qūrā made careful preparations, securing for himself the decree from Emperor Zeno⁴⁵.

These findings prompt us to conclude that Narsai's departure must have taken place after 471, the year of Qūrā's enthronement, but years before the liquidation of the School of Edessa in 489⁴⁶. These are the calculations which point to the period during which the founding of the School of Nisibis has taken place.

³⁹ This situation must have had a serious nature so that Narsai had to pacify the feelings and sentiments of his friends and adherents, producing an apology, *ibid.*, p. 604 f.

⁴⁰ It is obvious that Barhadbešabbā is actually quoting from a writing of Narsai written for this purpose. Thereby an excerpt of it has been preserved, important for the enlightenment of the historical question of Narsai's departure, see VÖÖBUS, *Vestige d'une lettre de Narsai*.

⁴¹ BARHADBEŠABBĀ, *Histoire*, ed. NAU, p. 603.

⁴² BARHADBEŠABBĀ, *Fondation*, ed. SCHER, p. 384.

⁴³ MARI, *De patriarchis nest.*, ed. GISMONDI, p. 44.

⁴⁴ *Chronicon Edessenum* LXXII, ed. GUIDI, p. 8.

⁴⁵ ŠEM'ŌN OF BĒT ARŠAM, *Epistola*, ed. ASSEMANI, p. 353.

⁴⁶ Ζήνων ὁ βασιλεὺς ἀντικαταστρέψας τὴν ἐν Ἐδέσσει τῶν Περσῶν καλουμένην διατριβὴν, ὡς τὰ Νεστορίου καὶ Θεοδώρου παραδιδούσαν διδασκαλίαν, ἠθέτησεν, THEODORUS ANAGNOSTES, *Excerpta ex historia eccl.*, ed. MIGNE, col. 209.

II

THE DIRECTORS RELATED TO THE STATUTES

1. NARSAI

In the following some introductory remarks are offered regarding the directors who have contributed to the growth of this institution and who appear on the pages of the document edited here.

When Narsai took the rule of the new school into his hands, he was already not only a teacher with stature but also an experienced administrator. He brought with him a thorough familiarity with the duties of directorship and a rich experience in teaching, gathered in the School of Edessa. All this preparation became an asset in the foundation and the organization of the School of Nisibis.

As a person¹, Narsai enjoyed an immense reputation. He must have been particularly powerful through the combination of various gifts and talents. His piety and asceticism were objects of admiration. His learning and knowledge were regarded as something unique. His talents in poetry and his mastery of language have been immortalized by the tradition in the epitheton : 'the harp of the (Holy) Spirit'². This he has earned by his literary creation³ in the eyes of his contemporaries as exceptional. To be sure, traditions regarding his literary work have grown without proper control⁴, but trustworthy data still appear in the earliest sources⁵. These speak of the genre of didactic poetry. On the other hand the genre of literature devoted to exegetical work shows that Narsai did not belong to those regarded as authorities on whose shoulders the hermeneutic traditions rest⁶.

¹ Born in 'Ain Dūlbā in the country of Ma'alā.

² 'ABDĪŠŌ', *Catalogus*, ed. ASSEMANI, p. 65.

³ See also BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte syr. Literatur*, p. 109 ff.

⁴ See *Histoire nestorienne*, ed. SCHER, VII, p. 115; cf. also 'ABDĪŠŌ', *Catalogus*, ed. ASSEMANI, p. 63 ff.

⁵ BARĤADBEŠABBĀ, *Fondation*, ed. SCHER, p. 386; BARĤADBEŠABBĀ, *Histoire*, ed. NAU, p. 612.

⁶ Very instructive is a compendium of exegetical knowledge on the Pentateuch. Here many authorities are quoted frequently, but Narsai's name appears only once here, Ms. Ming. syr 553, fol. 87 a. The same is the

Narsai's title, quoted above, shows where his strength lies — in the genre of didactic poetry, cast in seven and twelve syllable meter. This gift he unfolded before the eyes of his amazed contemporaries. He expressed himself with a richness seldom seen. What has survived destruction are parts of collections of various size which obviously were arranged within the framework of the church year and oriented according to the liturgical traditions⁷. Through these *mēmre* a master speaks to us, who belongs to the few of the most eminent who have reached the zenith of producing elegance of style in Syriac and of writing what were to become the recognized classics in the Syriac literature.

Such a creation necessitates at least some explanatory words. It is unavoidable to characterize briefly the nature of Narsai's literary creation in the *mēmre*, the other genders of his poetical work cannot be touched upon here.

Most of Narsai's literary creation grew out of the world of the Bible. The many facets of its thought stimulated his literary meditation. He focussed upon these inexhaustible sources of illumination and inspiration again and again. Although there is among his *mēmre* a very small cycle in the form of exegetical studies, in which he treats the biblical texts of Genesis in a more systematic, methodical and scholarly fashion, his real interest does not lie in this direction. His practical mind needed greater blocks of themes and topics more elastic and profitable for his didactic interests. So in the Old Testament he was attracted by biblical history, stories of the patriarchs, and other personalities. Episodes relating to religious experiences sparked his particular fervor. A still larger number of the *mēmre* draw upon the New Testament sources. These treat narratives in the Life of Jesus, episodes in the gospel tradi-

situation in the *Gannat būssāmē*, Ms. Ryl. syr. 41. References to Narsai appear in the commentaries of Īšō'dād, Ms. Br. Mus. or. 4524, *Commentare, Commentaire* I-II and in Ishāq Šebadnāiā, Ms. Ming. syr. 57, but these are easily recognized as having been taken from the *mēmre*. In the commentaries of Īšō'dād of Merv, bishop of Hedatā, on the New

Testament, *Commentaries*, I-V, there is not a single reference to Narsai.

⁷ *Homiliae et carmina*, ed. MINGANA, I-II. However, this edition contains only a part of the *mēmre* which have survived; the rest is still in manuscripts waiting to be edited. See a comprehensive survey of these materials in VÖÖBUS, *School of Nisibis*, chapter III, 4.

tion, parables, events in the history of salvation, and outstanding evangelists and apostles. In the same manner also the Christian Kerygma has provided themes for a number of the *mēmre*. Various truths of the Christian proclamation have been set into verse.

The *mēmre* which bear witness to his interest in the cult constitute an important part of his literary creation. Many of his *mēmre* were put into the setting of the church-year and are liturgically orientated. Many deal especially with the festivals and feast-days. These speak loudly of the inspiration Narsai drew from his desire to elucidate the meaning of worship. Besides the more general genre of his *mēmre* he devoted to the same purpose also some commentaries on the liturgies. This material once more reveals his desire to foster the cult and make its liturgy alive and more meaningful.

The *mēmre* which have been inspired by other sources are in the minority. A small cycle of the *mēmre* owes its birth to his reflection on special issues of Christian ethics. Theological reflection, speculation and finesse of dogmatic definition play an insignificant part in the body of Narsai's literary creation. Only occasionally did Narsai rely on these sources for inspiration. His practically oriented mind obviously saw little attraction and stimulation in this area.

The history of the Christian church has rarely excited Narsai's mind. Only a few facets captured his imagination sufficiently to find expression in his *mēmre*: confessors, martyrs, Christian mission and the pillars of the Antiochian School, Diodor, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius.

The conditions in the church also moved him to speak. Through these verses one can sense some of the atmosphere in which he lived, worked and struggled, and some of the weaknesses and failures in the Christian communities and in the clergy, conditions which rested heavily upon his heart⁷.

⁷ The collections of the *mēmre* are of various sizes. The largest collection in Ms. Alqoš 160 and 161 contains 70 *mēmre* (28 and 42 respectively). Ms. Br. Mus. orient. 5463 has the same number. Next to this is Ms. Br. Mus. orient. 9367 and 9368 with 64 *mēmre* (36 and 28 respectively). After these come: Ms. Baghd. 603, part I-IV: 51; Ms. Baghd. 605: 38; Ms. Ming. syr. 55: 37; Ms. Mus. Borg. syr. 79: 33; Ms. Mus. Borg. syr. 83:

Narsai's manifold contribution, as teacher, author and director, is the more important since it took place at a time which was the most significant epoch for Christendom in Persia, namely when the foundations were laid for the Christianity of the Nestorian creed.

The chronological frame of Narsai's life and work is very difficult, even hopelessly confused. In the sources at our disposal we have to do with a gradual agglomeration of additions. Their boasting of exact data for all the phases of Narsai's work is too much. Even phantastic numbers have been given. In such a situation the only secure way is that which is offered by the texts published on the following pages. Their testimony is that Narsai was still in his office in the year 496, namely when the new legislation took place.

Further, there is a report about an episode regarding an intrigue, arranged by Narsai's adversaries as to how he was denounced by certain persons whose names are mentioned, and that this took place when Qawad besieged Amid⁸. If, indeed, this story is historically true, which, incidentally, is supported in a slightly different but independent way by another source, then Narsai must still have been alive in 503, the year when this siege took place⁹.

That this sad event in the stormy history of Amid is related to the end of Narsai's days emerges in another source independent from the previous one, namely in the Chronicle of Arbēl. This source does not speak about the intrigue and plots, but tells us about the war between Emperor Anastasius and Qawad, that the Persians took away along with Amid many places from Byzantine territory. But then the Persians were compelled to return in order to defend their own country against the incursion of the Huns. In this connection the chronicle adds that Mār Narsai died while the troops were in Nisibis¹⁰.

This configuration in tradition, receiving support from two different quarters, can be regarded as reasonably certain that at the time the fortunes of war began to turn against the Persians, Narsai closed his eyes for ever.

32; Ms. Baghd. 601: 31; Ms. Baghd. p. 613.

602: 25; Ms. Berl. Sach. 174, 175, 9 Īṣōc OF ZUQNĪN, *Chronicle*, ed. WRIGHT, p. 50 f.

176: 25; Ms. Vat. syr. 588: 20; Ms. Vat. syr. 594: 17.

10 MEŠĪHĀZEKĀ, *Histoire*, ed. MIN-GANA, p. 70.

8 BARHADBEŠABBĀ, *Histoire*, ed. NAU,

2. ABRAHAM

After Narsai's death Abraham became the third director of the school. In his person the leadership went to a man very close to Narsai. Abraham was a relative, who since his youth had grown up under Narsai's hand and had been instructed by him. So Narsai had created an image of the school in him. Also in other respects Abraham stepped into the vestiges of his great teacher. In piety, asceticism and spirit he was no less revered. In some respects he seems to have excelled his master. In teaching he enjoyed a great reputation. At least in one respect he was credited with special accomplishment. It is reported that for many students it was very difficult to understand the meaning of the Syriac translations of the works of Theodore of Mopsuestia, the normative textbooks in the curriculum, since these were complicated because of the intricacy of the Greek style of Theodore. Abraham made them palatable to the students and so facilitated instruction and learning¹¹. Also his literary creation reveals a wider range. This change is marked by a definite transition from poetry to prose. Besides his contribution to the exegetical field¹², evidenced by the tradition¹³, Abraham also entered studies of historical nature¹⁴.

There is one area in which Abraham first was not fully prepared. In administration he did not have the necessary experience. Tradition has kept the remembrances of some unpleasant episodes which are explained by the lack of experience in his youthful age¹⁵. This gave

¹¹ BARḤADBEŠABBĀ, *Histoire*, ed. NAU, p. 622.

¹² BARḤADBEŠABBĀ, *Fondation*, ed. SCHER, p. 389; 'ABDĪŠŌ, *Catalogus*, ed. ASSEMANI, p. 71.

¹³ In a repertory of exegetical traditions of the great luminaries in this discipline on the Pentateuch the most frequently quoted authority is Abraham, Ms. Ming. syr. 553, fol. 8 a ff., Ms. Alqoš 34 and Ms. Vat. syr. 578. See also Ms. Berl. orient. fol. 1261. Other remnants in Ms. Jer. Patr. syr. 10, fol. 125 a, 188 b and Ms. Br. Mus. orient. 4524, fol. 84 a, 135 a (Lev.,

Sam.); Ms. Ming. syr. 58, fol. 17 b. (Psalms).

¹⁴ The text in 'ABDĪŠŌ, *Catalogus*, ed. ASSEMANI, p. 71 is so corrupted that it does not reveal the character of this work. The correct title is: 'the Cause of the Foundation (of the Schools) in Summary Chapters', see Ms. Borg. syr. 1, fol. 198 b; Ms. Borg. syr. 34, fol. 116 a; Ms. Borg. syr. 38, fol. 49 b; Ms. Par. syr. 315, fol. 59 a and Ms. Br. Mus. orient. 4069, fol. 112 a. Cf. 'ABDĪŠŌ, *Catalogus*, ed. VÖÖBUS.

¹⁵ *Sources syriaques*, ed. MINGANA, p. 73 f.

ground even for intrigues¹⁶. There evidently have been unfortunate experiences which must have embittered Abraham's life, although what exactly happened, the sources try to pass by quickly or cover with a veneer of free adjustments in the facts. According to all we are able to find out Jōhannān of Bēt Rabban was appointed Abraham's assistant or even co-administrator¹⁷.

However, where Abraham first failed he could give later compensation. Tradition attributes great accomplishments to him. Under his directorship the efflorescence of the school reached such a degree that the size of the student body passed the number of 1000¹⁸. Tradition also credits him with accomplishments in undertaking commensurate steps to cope with the needs of the advancing institution. These involved the expansion of the physical facilities and the reorganization of the institution for more effective work. Thus new buildings for the residence of students, study and maintenance were created, and the maintenance of the neglected part of the teaching personnel put on solid financial footing¹⁹.

Flourishing life, however, was not spared from setbacks. The blow came which closed the school for 2 years²⁰. Obviously political reasons were involved in this action. And when the school could resume its operation, not all the students who in the meantime had attended other schools, returned.

Chronologically speaking, Abraham's case is in even deeper darkness than that of his great predecessor. There is no solid element which could be a point of departure. How long he directed the school is not clear. He is reported to have guided the instruction for 60 years²¹. The tradition on this matter is remarkably consistent. However, the possibilities of checking its trustworthiness are nil. Only one observation of merit can be brought forth in this connection. At the time Mešihāzekā wrote his annalistic work, Abraham still occupied the chair. Since he refers to the return of

¹⁶ In this period Elišaḥ bar Qūzbāiē took over the leadership, BARHADBEŠABBĀ, *Histoire*, ed. NAU, p. 620. This tradition, however, does not deserve trust, since it obviously has confused the picture, see the discussion of these problems in VÖÖBUS, *School of Nisibis*, chapter IV.

¹⁷ About this Jōhannān see *ibid.* chapter VII.

¹⁸ BARHADBEŠABBĀ, *Histoire*, ed. NAU, p. 620.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 620 ff.

²⁰ Ms. Ming. syr. 547, fol. 80 b.

²¹ BARHADBEŠABBĀ, *Histoire*, ed. NAU, p. 630.

the Catholicos Abā from Bēt Hūzāiē²² in the year 551, we can infer that Abraham was at that time still in office. According to our sources Abraham was able to continue in the office of director until about 569 A.D.

3. HENĀNĀ

After a period in which the post of the director was filled only for a shorter time by others²³ the leadership went to Henānā. He did not only take over the rule for a long period, but was a man who exercised great influence reaching far beyond the activities within the school. The spell of his reputation drew also other schools into the orbit of his influence²⁴.

For his admirers Henānā was an exceptional luminary in personal devotion, personality and intellectual capacity. In this respect he was celebrated as a coryphee without counterpart. This is illustrated by an eulogy given about him, written by a grateful disciple at a time when Henānā still was in the school²⁵. In fact Henānā was a man of stature, equipped with many gifts. Cords of tradition did not bind him to the beaten track. In exegesis he went his own way, leaving the pure grammatical, historical exegesis of the Antiochian school, refined methodologically by Theodore of Mopsuestia. Thereby in the stream of exegetical traditions of the Eastern Syrians Henānā appears as a new tributary. That all this meant enrichment of the exegetical traditions is shown by the vibration of his influence long after the echo of controversy, which Henānā had aroused, had disappeared²⁶. Also in his theology Henānā went his own way and did not conceal his penchant for Origen. The range of Henānā's spirit is reflected also in his literary creation, which produced a

²² *Sources syriaques*, ed. MINGANA, p. 75.

²³ Barhadbešabbā claims that after Abraham's death the rule over the school went to ʾIšō'iahb of Bēt ʿAr-baiā, *Fondation*, ed. SCHER, p. 389 f. Also his own words seem to allude to this, *Synodicon orientale*, ed. CHABOT, p. 167₁₆. He resigned after 2 years in order to become bishop of Arzūn. After him the directorship was laid

on Abraham Nišibnāiā, BARHADBEŠABBĀ, *Fondation*, ed. SCHER, p. 390. Sūrin calls him Abraham Qardahē, *Mēmra*, ed. SCHER, p. 400₁₃₋₁₄. He could direct the school only for one year.

²⁴ BARHADBEŠABBĀ, *Fondation*, ed. SCHER, p. 392₁₂₋₁₃.

²⁵ BARHADBEŠABBĀ, *Fondation*, ed. SCHER, p. 392.

²⁶ DIETRICH, *Išo'dadh's Stellung*, p. LX ff.

large number of commentaries, expositions of the symbol and liturgy, and other works ²⁷.

Such a spirit at the helm of the institution brought the school once again to its élan. If we are to believe Marī, the number of students reached the mark of 800 ²⁸. However this was a zenith before a decline of critical nature. The work in the school was precipitated into such a situation by the implications of conflicts and strifes for which Henānā had himself to blame.

Henānā's reorientation on his theological thinking contained so much explosive force, since it meant a departure from the normative, namely the authority of Theodore of Mopsuestia. Thus, for many Henānā was nothing else than an *enfant terrible*, who had succumbed to heterodox views and had perverted the faith. There are even authors who have left him out of the list of the directors of the school and ignored him entirely ²⁹. This agitation became more acute after the Catholicos Īšō'iahb pressed through a condemnation of Henānā's work in 585 ³⁰, and inaugurated a new phase in the battles and quarrels which have delighted the Jacobites very much. These agitations became even more acute when Grīgōr became the metropolitan of Nisibis, about 596 ³¹. Nevertheless Henānā could retain his position in the school, which was possible only because he had influential friends and protectors in the hierarchy and at the royal court. However, if his adversaries could not get rid of him, they prepared a blow for him where no one could help him — a revolt in the school. This meant a loss of the students with the exception of only a small group ³². However, in the light of the

²⁷ 'ABDĪŠŌ', *Catalogus*, ed. ASSEMANI, p. 81 ff. This list hardly scratches the surface. He tries to justify this kind of treatment by admitting that the literary creation Henānā produced was far larger but that doctrinal considerations had inspired him to tamper with the report: 'he has many (other) books, rejected on the account of the Interpreter'. About Henānā's literary work see VÖÖBUS, *School of Nisibis*, chapter VIII.

²⁸ *De patriarchis nest.*, ed. GISMONDI, p. 54.

²⁹ See a brief survey of the directors, SŪRĪN, *Mēmra*, ed. SCHER, p. 400.

³⁰ Canon II, *Synodicon orientale*, ed. CHABOT, p. 136 ff.

³¹ According to the testimony of Mikā in the year 907 A.Gr. = 596 A.D. Sabrīšō', bishop of Lāšōm became catholicos and about that time Grīgōr was consecrated as metropolitan of Nisibis, ELIĀ, *Opus chronologicum*, ed. BROOKS et CHABOT, p. 124.

³² *Histoire nestorienne*, ed. SCHER, XIII, p. 510.

documentary evidence in the texts published here, we are left with the impression that in the year 602 the school must have recovered at least partly from the loss of so much blood ³³. This impression is confirmed by some other observations ³⁴.

The chronological side of Ḥenānā's life and work is very unsatisfactory. The year in which he began his directorship is unknown, a guess puts it somewhere around 570. How long his rule lasted cannot be determined. Only considerations of a general nature can guide us. One source comes to our aid by telling of the attempts at the court to bring Ḥenānā or one of his disciples to the catholicos seat — an action ³⁵ which naturally must have caused much excitement ³⁶. That means that Ḥenānā was alive at that time, namely, after the death of Catholicos Grīgōr in 609. However, when in 612 Khosrau ordered a discussion between both rival ecclesiastical parties and in connection with this the bishops and monks prepared a memorandum and anathematized Ḥenānā and his partisans, Ḥenānā must have been resting from the strifes and quarrels for some years.

³³ See page 103 f.

³⁴ *Histoire nestorienne*, ed. SCHER, XIII, p. 528.

³⁵ These were the aspirations of Gabri'el, a physician, see BĀBAI, *Taš'itā de-Mār Gīwargī*, ed. BEDJAN, p. 505 f.

³⁶ This terrifying eventuality haunted the church and upset it as described

by a contemporary witness: 'then bishops of the Orient together with true believers, zealous of faith, were in excitement and were frightened, and all the bishops prepared themselves to travel immediately to the court in order to find a way out', *ibid.*, p. 506.

III

ORIGIN OF THE STATUTES OF THE SCHOOL OF NISIBIS

1. THE FIRST CANONS OF NARSAI

Regarding the existence of these canons for the School of Nisibis we have no other information than that which appears in the texts edited on the following pages. No other source has preserved a memory of these. However, the preamble added to the first cycle of the canons, in the part that reports the alleged talk during the audience before Hōšeʿ, bishop of Nisibis, includes en passant a brief panoramic survey of the main events that preceded the foundation of the school and followed it which determined its rapid progress from the start. Here particularly the role played by Bishop Barṣaumā is depicted so that this had contributed vitally to the consolidation of the life of the school. Here the vestige of the existence of the first canons comes to the surface. On this occasion the text reads : 'He showed much care about it through the beautiful canons which he set up for them in order that they would be guided through these without disobedience and disorder. Also the whole community in one accord consented to the canons which Mār Barṣaumā the bishop set up for them. They did this even in writing and confirmed (it) by their signature' ¹.

However, this claim that Bishop Barṣaumā set up these canons, is certainly not to be taken literally. In this respect the preamble is more colorful than factual. Such a statement has arisen out of the easily understandable reason to attribute much honor to the head of the church — a tendency which is reflected in all these preambles. This we should understand realistically, that Narsai and his colleagues were instrumental in the creation of these norms.

Further the text tells ² that after the death of Bishop Barṣaumā

¹ See page 57 f.

² See page 53 f.

difficulties arose in the school through the activities of certain persons. Such a situation necessitated a new look at the legislation with the purpose of drawing up supplementary regulations. It is not said explicitly, but an impression is left — and this, indeed, is natural — that these first canons were amalgamated into an enlarged recension of the new statutes.

2. THE SECOND CANONS OF NARSAI

In regard to the circumstances of the establishment of this cycle of canons we learn in the longer preamble which has been added to the canons³. This took place in the month of *Tešrî qadim* of the year 808 according to the Greeks, i.e. 496 A.D. At that time Hōše' occupied the bishop's seat in Nisibis, but Narsai was still the director in the school. The procedure is described so that the leadership of the school had an audience before the bishop and submitted to him their plan regarding the revision of the canons in the interest of the welfare of the school. Their motivation was that there were persons who had caused such difficulties which had endangered the reputation of the whole school, causing criticism from the strangers and dismay on the part of the friends of the school⁴. Hōše' welcomed the plan, although he felt that the authorities of the school knew best what was needed for such a new legislation, and authorized them to set up the canons.

The authorization granted, the work of drafting was carried out by Narsai, Jaunān, the presbyter and the writer of the school⁵. Certainly assistance came from other teachers.

The preamble quickly passes over the other points of which we would like to learn more, but dwells in a lengthy manner on the justification of this undertaking. Allusions are made to certain persons whose behavior and conduct have been embarrassing to the school. It is said that the school had to pass through even critical moments. Allusions also refer to some who from outside have come to their aid, aggravating the situation⁶. The acuteness of these difficulties can be seen also in the statement included here, namely that everyone who does not obey and seeks for assistance

³ See page 51 ff.

⁴ See page 53 ff.

⁵ See page 60.

⁶ See page 58.

from the laymen or clergymen in the town — shall be cursed. Every one who dares to assist such persons is threatened in a similar way.

The preamble ends with the stipulation guaranteeing the preservation of these canons. Every one who dares to destroy them or alter something, will be punished with the exclusion from the mysteries of the church⁷.

The cycle of 22 canons covers two areas with unequal attention : on the one hand, the administration; namely the *rabbaitā* and the teachers, and on the other hand the students, which section occupies most of the space.

The cycle opens with the canons for the strengthening of the office of the *rabbaitā*, regulating his election, duties in general, and sanctions in the case of failure in meeting his obligations⁸.

For the teachers there is only one canon the purpose of which is to prevent possible neglect of their duties⁹.

The main part of the cycle purports to put strings on the activities of the students. This covers a variety of aspects relative to the work and life in the school : admission¹⁰, studies¹¹, and life¹² and death¹³ in the community. Associated are also some norms intended to regulate the life and activity of the students at the time of the recess¹⁴. The largest subsection comprises disciplinary canons covering neglect and moral lapse¹⁵, quarrel¹⁶, and stealing¹⁷.

⁷ See page 71 f.

⁸ Can. I : rules for election; can. II : jurisdiction in carrying out his disciplinary activity and handling financial matters and determining the norms of punishment; can. XXII : he has to pay a fine and accept expulsion.

About the qualifications of such a *rabbaitā* and his duties in monastic communities, see the Pseudo-Nicean canons, *Sūnhādōs tibēlāitā* L, 1-7, ed. VÖÖBUS; fuller attestation of manuscript evidence, see in *Les canons de Pseudo Nicée en syriaque*, L, 1-7, ed. VÖÖBUS.

⁹ Can. XX : reprimand and withdrawal of provisions.

¹⁰ Can. VII.

¹¹ Can. VIII, IX.

¹² Can. V-VI, X-XI.

¹³ Can. XVII : instructions about the validity of testaments.

¹⁴ Can. IV : trips to the Byzantine territory are forbidden. This is the longest canon and very explicit. It prohibits any kind of trip whether in the interest of study, religion or business, and includes norms for punishment; can V : permissible work and its regulation.

¹⁵ Can. III, XV, XIX and XXI.

¹⁶ Can. XII-XIII; can. XVI : false accusations; can. XIX : beating.

¹⁷ Can. XIV.

3. THE CANONS OF HENĀNĀ

It is a fortunate situation that we have some information also about the origin of the canons set up about a century later. At that time the directorship stood in the hands of Henānā. A short preamble informs us that this took place in the 12th year of the victory of Hormizd, i.e. in the year 590¹⁸. Further we are told that at that time Šemʿōn was the metropolitan of Nisibis and that he sanctioned the new canons. This is the same Šemʿōn who appears in the synodical acts of the year 585 in connection with a serious schism¹⁹. The mention of Qaššā²⁰, a teacher, Mār Henānīšōʿ the presbyter and Hūh the *rabbaitā* does not help us, since nothing is known about them in other sources.

This time we are permitted to look into conditions which we would particularly like to know. The preamble gives only vague allusions to the situation which necessitated this new legislation. Therefore we must turn to other sources. Here the clues are tantalizingly meagre. However, we do learn that under Henānā's leadership new winds began to blow between the walls of a school which had already a tradition of venerable age. This brought the school to its élan²¹. In view of this we may assume that such a large community of students must also have brought its problems with it. It must have been more difficult to maintain order and keep the standards. This we can deduce from the fact that the same problems remained later. In 602 the established rules were sought out and their authority was reestablished²².

What has been surmised, finds confirmation in the allusions in the canons themselves. Occasionally they speak a little more clearly about their background situation. The *mise-en-scène* reflects a need for stricter discipline. Whether there were other reasons than these, we cannot find out.

The first place in the cycle is occupied by the canons for the curator of the xenodocheion. This is quite understandable, since up to now nothing had been fixed in the older canons regarding

¹⁸ See page 91.

¹⁹ *Synodicon orientale*, ed. CHABOT, p. 163.

²⁰ See page 92.

²¹ See page 26.

²² See page 103 f.

this. In the meantime the school had made progress in adding a xenodocheion under the auspices of Abraham ²³, and it was an urgent necessity to fix some rules for the operation of this institution ²⁴.

Obviously there were needs to establish new and adequate norms for instruction, particularly in questions of admission ²⁵, in protection of the library facilities ²⁶, in regulation of the studies in medicine ²⁷ and in graduation ²⁸.

As urgent as the directives for instruction were the questions which involved the extracurricular activities of the students. Their activity during the school year and between the sessions was also the concern of the administration. This is unfolded in several regulations ²⁹.

The greater number of canons speak of need for stricter discipline and order which the increased student body made necessary. These involve matters like maintenance ³⁰, study ³¹, religious obligations ³², care for decent appearance ³³ and regulations for visiting the town ³⁴.

Finally there were some special questions which were felt important enough to be included ³⁵.

²³ BARHADBĒSABBĀ, *Histoire*, ed. NAU, p. 622 f.

²⁴ Can. I.

²⁵ Can. XV.

²⁶ Can. VIII.

²⁷ Can. XIX-XX.

²⁸ Can. VII.

²⁹ Can. X : work; can. XII, XVIII: teaching.

³⁰ Can. II-IV, IX and XIV.

³¹ Can. V.

³² Can. V, XI.

³³ Can. XVII.

³⁴ Can. XIII, and XVI.

³⁵ Can. VI : regulations for the case of death; can. XXI : rules which forbid hiding of escaped prisoners and helping the slaves to escape.

IV

PRESERVATION OF THE STATUTES

1. IN SYRIAC

The statutes of the School of Nisibis have shared the same fate as many other Syriac documents. The earliest copies have not survived. All the copies produced during the centuries after they were set up, are lost. In taking the particular character of these documents into account, this is not surprising. This is not a kind of text which has been copied and used frequently. It may be said that it is rather surprising that these canons have survived at all.

The earliest codex which remains is Ms. Alqoš syr. 169¹, which helps to lead us back into the 13th century. This is so in the best case. It might also belong to the 14th century. In any case a terrain which covers 7-8 centuries, cannot be crossed. The only compensation which we have is that all the manuscripts which are at our disposal, do not go back to the same earliest manuscript. When the manuscript tradition emerges it reveals not the same archetype but here we stand face to face with its ramifications. This is an advantage. So, in the light of the manuscripts which come from different directions, we are enabled to have a larger field of vision which gives us an idea of the past of the transmission of these documents.

Not all the codices which are at our disposal have preserved the complete text. There is one codex which offers only selected canons of both sets of the statutes. This is Ms. Ming. syr. 47². This recension obviously comes from a collection of the canonical sources from which the preambles were left out and the extent of the canons was reduced. Particularly the first selection reveals clearly the purpose of including the norms which positively speak of the studies, duties and obligations. This selection of the first cycle of the canons presents the following canons : I-II, V, VII-XI, XVIII, and XXII. Of the second cycle the following canons are included : I-II, XIII, XV-

¹ See page 43.

² See page 45.

XVIII, and XXI. However the preambles are included in this manuscript.

Finally a word should be said about an epitome preserved by Ms. Par. syr. 306³. It is a very short epitome which includes only a limited number of canons and produces only the gist of them. From the first cycle only the following canons are included : I-II, IV, VI, IX, XII, XIV-XV, and XXI, and of the second cycle : I, XIV-XVI, and XVII.

2. IN ARABIC

The statutes of the School of Nisibis have come down to us also in an Arabic translation. This we owe to the translation of the codification work titled : *Fiqh an-naṣrānīya*⁴ which among other legislative sources has also included these two cycles of the canons. The section dealing with the schools offers these texts but without the historically significant preambles.

The only real manuscript of the *Fiqh an-naṣrānīya* has been preserved without a title and colophon⁵, and so all the data about the origin of this source are lost here. However, a testimony that comes from the first part of the 13th century in Ibn al-ʿAssāl assures us that this translation was prepared by Ibn aṭ-Ṭaiyib⁶, a tradition that is seconded also by Abū ʿl-Barakāt (d. 1363)⁷.

The information about Ibn aṭ-Ṭaiyib comes from a number of sources the oldest of which is al-Baihaqī (d. 1169) who tells that he was a Nestorian Christian, and flourished in the first half of the 11th century as a philosopher, clergyman and physician in Baghdad⁸. He was well known as an author of many scholarly works in various fields⁹. He died in 1043¹⁰.

³ See page 46.

⁴ Ed. HOENERBACH et SPIES, part II.

⁵ Ms. Vat. arab. 153.

⁶ Its title is quoted as : *Fiqh an-naṣārā*, NICOLL, *Bibliothecae Bodleianae codium mss. catalogus* II, 1, p. 42.

⁷ He says that he compiled a codification work and gives its title : *Fiqh an-naṣrānīya*, see his *Miṣbāḥ*

aṣ-ṣilma VII, ed. RIEDEL, p. 653.

⁸ *Tatimma Ṣiwān al-ḥikma*, ed. SHAFI, p. 27 ff.

⁹ GRAF, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*, II, p. 160.

¹⁰ It has been postulated by RIEDEL, *Kirchenrechtsquellen*, p. 151 f., that the author of the *Fiqh* was another one with the same name who lived in the 14th century.

With regard to the character of the Arabic version of the statutes, which is earlier than the earliest Syriac manuscript at our disposal, our hopes of finding some aid here to textual criticism are disappointed. This translation partly shows reductions, partly accretions. There are also modifications and changes. As an analysis shows, most of the readings rule themselves out of court, without ado. All this gives the impression that this text is rather a recension than a translation. Thus here the outcome is the same as that which has been observed in other parts of the text of this compendium in Arabic, namely in the *Leges Constantini et Leonis*¹¹, the synodical canons¹², and other legislative materials¹³.

However, we do not have answers to all our questions regarding the sources of all these changes. This problem becomes more complicated since Ibn at-Ṭaiyib did not translate these materials directly from the original Syriac documents but there was a mediator between the authentic sources and the Arabic version of them — namely a codification work which was composed in Syriac. Whether this belonged, as it has been assumed¹⁴, to Gabri'el, metropolitan of Bāṣrā who composed his compendium in Syriac in the second half of the 9th century, is another question¹⁵. There is the possibility that at least one part of all these changes goes back to this Syriac *Unterlage*. The agglomeration of reductions, additions and modifications is what appears as a characteristic feature in the stream of tradition of such compendiums¹⁶. Thus we have reasons to be open to the possibility that there are elements which Ibn at-Ṭaiyib found

11 '... diesem Auszug heften vielerlei Fehler an, die aus Unkenntnis, Missverständnis oder Flüchtigkeit hervorgegangen sind. Derjenige syrische Text, welcher dem Ibn Alṭajjib vorlag, ist mit allen Fehlern derselbe wie die uns in der vatikanischen Kopie vorliegende, und für die Interpretation der einzelnen Gesetze gewinnt man aus seiner Übersetzung nichts, oder jedenfalls kaum mehr als einen weiteren Beitrag zur Geschichte der Irrungen', SACHAU, *Syrische Rechtsbücher*, I, p. XIII.

12 GYIDI, *Ostsyrische Bischöfe*, p. 388 f.

13 ĪṢŌC BAR NŪN, *Qānūnē*, ed. VÖÖBUS, p. 191 ff.

14 '... eine fast vollständige Übersetzung oder vielmehr wohl eine freie, kompilatorische Bearbeitung eines syrischen Rechtswerkes des nestorianischen Bischofs Gabriel von Bāṣrā', GRAF, *Rechtswerk des Nestorianers Gabriel*, p. 518.

15 See VÖÖBUS, *Nachrichten über das Rechtswerk des Gabriel von Baṣra*.

16 VÖÖBUS, *Die syrischen Kanonesammlungen*, II, part V.

already in the Syriac texts. In any case, in view of all this, a reading should never be accepted as an element that has a claim for authenticity unless its intrinsic quality can stand the severest test.

3. THE COMPENDIUM OF 'ABDĪŠŌ'

For the transmission of the ecclesiastical canons there is another channel. This is the work of codification¹⁷ prepared by 'Abdīšō', metropolitan of Nisibis (d. 1318). A number of canons have escaped oblivion only through this channel¹⁸.

It is a matter of regret that the statutes of the School of Nisibis have not been included into these legislative materials. This is not only so in the manuscript¹⁹ edited by Assemani. Since certain manuscripts show differences occasionally²⁰ and the codification work does include something of the rules for the school, it was necessary to examine the situation in other manuscripts.

Thus a search had to be extended to all the manuscripts of the work of 'Abdīšō', which are available to us, in the hope of shedding new light on the problems created by the manner of his presentation. Manuscripts which were examined are located in the following places : in the Vatican — both the general collection²¹ as well as that of Borgia²² —, in Paris²³, Berlin²⁴, Cambridge²⁵, London²⁶ and Birmingham²⁷. The search was extended also to manuscripts in the Orient. Examined were the codices found in Baghdad²⁸, Alqoš²⁹ and in the Monastery of Mār Gīwargī³⁰. However, none of these reveal any knowledge of these statutes.

'Abdīšō', however, offers something else. There is a piece introduced by the title : '(the canons) of the School of Nisibis'³¹. It is noteworthy that 'Abdīšō' could reproduce this piece from his source

¹⁷ *Nomocanon*, ed. ASSEMANI.

¹⁸ VÖÖBUS, *Die syrischen Kanonesammlungen*, II, part I-II, IV.

¹⁹ Ms. Vat. syr. 129.

²⁰ VÖÖBUS, *Die syrischen Kanonesammlungen*, II, part V.

²¹ Ms. Vat. syr. 128 (1556); Ms. 355.

²² Ms. Mus. Borg. syr. 52 (1468); Ms. 53 (1643).

²³ Ms. Par. syr. 323 (1881).

²⁴ Ms. Berl. Sach. 120 (1714).

²⁵ Ms. Cambr. Add. 2022 (17 cent.).

²⁶ Ms. Br. Mus. orient. 4398 (1890).

²⁷ Ms. Ming. syr. 121 (1655); Ms. 246 (1913).

²⁸ Ms. Baghd. 401 (1564); Ms. 402 (17 cent.); Ms. Baghd. A, fol. 29 a - 211 b (17 cent.).

²⁹ Ms. Alqoš 175 (1893).

³⁰ Ms. Gīw. A (1701).

³¹ *Nomocanon*, ed. ASSEMANI, p. 132.

without sensing any difficulty, since in the *Fiqh an-naṣrānīya* the same piece is introduced as a part under the general heading 'the canons of the Apostles'³² without any reference to this particular provenance. Since there are questions which are not clear, it would be better to introduce this text and the discussion of it separately as an appendix³³.

³² Ed. HOENERBACH et SPIES, p. 161.

³³ See page 107 ff.

Ms. Alqoš 169

its own terminology it is : — **ܐܬܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ**
ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܒܪܗܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ,
ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ‘a collection of the synods which our father,

1 *Syri orientales*, p. 122.
 2 Its ancient number was Ms. 90.
 3 This is the text that appears at the end of the manuscript, cah. 42, fol. 5 b.
 4 He ruled from 1028 till 1049, cf.

² Its ancient number was Ms. 90.

posant se rapporte à la foi ou à la discipline de l'Église, et émane soit des Conciles, soit des Pères de l'Église ou des Patriarches d'Orient. Nombreuses et variées les matières qui y sont traitées', *ibid.* p. 63.

6 Cah. 17, fol. 20 a - cah. 18, fol. 6 b.

7 Cal. 18, fol. 6 b - 9 a.

8 About these documents, see VÖÖBUS, *Die syrischen Kanoncssammlungen*, II, part I.

The codex has no colophon about its date, since it bears the signs of the vicissitudes of time and has suffered particularly at the beginning and at the end⁸. However palaeographically the character of the script can be placed into the 13th or the 14th century⁹.

This is the codex which is the basis for the edition (A).

Ms. Mus. Borg. syr. 82

This codex¹⁰ is a collection of the acts of the synods and other cognate documents¹¹. It also includes the statutes, the first¹² and the second cycle¹³.

The manuscript displays many lacunae in places where the copist could not decipher the text in the *Vorlage*.

The manuscript is a recent copy written before the year 1869 when the Chorepiscopus David brought it from Mossul to Rome.

This text which appears in the critical apparatus as B, was edited by Guidi¹⁴. Unfortunately a number of typographical errors have escaped the correcting eye in this text edition.

Ms. Vat. syr. 599

The collection of legislative sources has also embedded the first¹⁵ and the second¹⁶ cycle of the statutes.

The codex includes a colophon¹⁷, which informs us about the time and place of its origin: 'this book was written in the village of Alqoš in the land of Mossul, in the year 1871 of the Messiah'.

This text appears in the critical apparatus as C.

⁸ There was even the need to supplement one part of it, namely the history and the canons of the council of Nicaea.

⁹ See also SCHER, *Notice sur les manuscrits*, p. 58.

¹⁰ SCHER, *Notice sur les manuscrits*, p. 268.

'Der Copist... liess statt der zahlreichen ihm unleserlich gewordenen Stellen entsprechende Lücken. Anfang und Schluss fehlen. Auch ist die Abschrift ebenso incorrect als kalligraphisch schön und zwingt zu zahlrei-

chen Correcturen', BRAUN, *Buch der Synhados*, p. 3 f.

¹¹ Regarding the description of its content see CERSOY, *Manuscrits orientaux*, p. 365 ff; about a fuller description of it, see CHABOT, *Synodicon orientale*, p. 2 ff.

¹² Fol. 351 b - 358 a.

¹³ Fol. 358 a - 360 b.

¹⁴ *Gli statuti della scuola di Nisibi*, p. 169 ff.

¹⁵ Fol. 87 a - 95 a.

¹⁶ Fol. 95 a - 97 b.

¹⁷ Fol. 305 a.

Ms. Br. Mus. orient. 9386

In this codex of similar content, in the second part of it, which has its independent pagination, there also appears the first¹⁸ and the second cycle¹⁹ of the statutes.

The text reveals lacunae which indicate that its *Vorlage* was already defective.

The codex is of recent hand. According to the colophon²⁰ this part of the manuscript was copied in the village of Tell Kephā by Pheranses bar Šamō, in the year 1890. It was later acquired by the British Museum. However, it does not appear in the supplement of the catalogue of manuscripts²¹.

This manuscript appears in the critical apparatus as D.

Ms. Ming. syr. 47

This codex of similar content is located in the Selly Oak Colleges near Birmingham²². Among the legislative documents the first²³ and the second cycle²⁴ of the statutes have also been embedded. However, the complete text of both cycles has not been included, but only selected parts of it. Thus, this witness as far as the statutes are concerned, is an abridgement²⁵.

The manuscript is of recent hand. It provides us with no accurate information about its origin. However, the last piece²⁶ of text which the manuscript includes is a chronology of various events that took place in the Orient from 1049 A.G. till 1921 A.D.²⁷. Judging from this text the codex must be later than the date just quoted.

In the textual apparatus this manuscript bears the designation E.

18 Fol. 83 b - 89 a.

19 Fol. 89 a - 94 a.

20 Fol. 289 b.

21 This manuscript does not appear in *Margoliouth, Descriptive List* which ends with Ms. Br. Mus. orient. 5463.

22 MINGANA, *Catalogue*, I, col. 121-133.

‘Synods of the East Syrian Church

and other tracts... Written in a clear and handsome East Syrian hand. Fully vowelled. Profusely rubricated’, *ibid.*, col. 121, 133.

23 Fol. 156 b - 162 b.

24 Fol. 162 b - 163 b.

25 See page 37.

26 Fol. 268 a - 268 b.

27 MINGANA, *Catalogue*, I, col. 133.

Ms. Ming. syr. 586

This codex, also located in the Selly Oak Colleges near Birmingham²⁸, is the first volume of an extensive collection of legislative materials, which include also the first²⁹ and the second cycle³⁰ of the statutes.

The codex is of recent origin. This time we are furnished with exact data of its genesis. The colophon at the end of the manuscript³¹ informs that it was copied in the year 1932 in the village of Alqoš. It was copied through the Deacon Mattai bar Paulos. Further we are informed that the manuscript was copied in the Monastery of Our Lady near Alqoš³².

The siglum of this manuscript for the textual apparatus is F.

Ms. Par syr. 306

This is a manuscript which has included various texts of legislative character³³. Here also a cycle of the statutes has been used³⁴. This, however, is but a short epitome which leaves out other texts of historical character and includes only a limited number of canons³⁵. Using the canons this epitome produces a gist of them. This is what the compiler has also done with other material of similar nature³⁶.

The codex was written in the year 1889³⁷.

Ms. Seert 65

Finally some words should be mentioned about the codex which according to its age was the second to the earliest one. Although it does not exist any more and along with other unique documents has fallen victim to the fury of devastation in Turkey, it still

²⁸ 'An extensive collection of Synodical Acts and Canons according to the East Syrian Church', *ibid.*, col. 1109 f.

²⁹ Fol. 373 b - 379 a.

³⁰ Fol. 379 a - 382 b.

³¹ Fol. 462 a.

³² MINGANA, *Catalogue*, I, col. 1109 f., 1116.

³³ CHABOT, *Notices sur les manus-*

cripts, p. 254; see also NAU, *Notices des manuscrits*, p. 280.

³⁴ Fol. 111 b.

³⁵ See page 38.

³⁶ Namely in the canons established by Abraham of Kaškar and Dadīšō of Bēt Dārāie for the community in the Monastery of Īzlā, see *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, ed. VÖÖBUS, p. 151, 164.

deserves to be mentioned since this codex has certainly become a source of the variants in the textual transmission of the statutes.

Already Chayyat has called attention to this codex³⁸. A brief description of its content is provided by Scher³⁹. It was a copy of a defective codex⁴⁰. From the description it is not clear⁴¹ but most probably the manuscript included both cycles of the statutes.

The manuscript did not contain any definite information about the date and place of writing, but its script placed the codex into the 17th or 18th century⁴².

³⁷ Fol. 34 b. Further the colophon states that the manuscript was copied by 'Abd al-Aziz.

³⁸ *Syri orientales*, p. 122.

³⁹ *Catalogue*, p. 48 ff.

⁴⁰ 'Il y a, en outre, des lacunes

dans le corps du livre qui paraît être copié sur un ouvrage antérieure, lui-même incomplet', *ibid.*, p. 48.

⁴¹ 'XVI°. Règles et statuts de l'École de Nisibe', *ibid.*, p. 50.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 51.

PART II

ܡܩܬܬܐ

ܕܝܫܘܠܐ ܕܡܕܢܬܐ ܕܢܝܨܒܝܬ

THE CANONS
OF THE HOLY SCHOOL OF THE TOWN OF NISIBIS

[illegible]

¹ **ወ** DEF — ² **አስላኝነት** B — ³ **አገልግሎት** B

[PROEM]

In the month of 'Ilūl¹ of the thirteenth year of the victory² of our gracious and beneficent³ lord Khosrau, king of kings, preserved and protected⁴ through the grace that is from heaven, giving peace to the world, victorious until eternity; (and) under the direction of the elect friend of God, blessed father Mār Aḥā-deābūhi⁵, the bishop — metropolitan of Nisibis, — we, the prin-

¹ According to the Syrians the twelfth month, answering to most of September and part of October.

2 This is a reference to the events of the year 590 which brought Khosrau Parvez to the throne, cf. CHRISTENSEN, *L'Iran*, p. 444. According to the calculation given in our document the year is 602 A.D.

3 Christians had many reasons to

use such epithets. In his liberality Khosrau Parvez favored Christians and made contributions to the ecclesiastical institutions. See footnote 3, page 103.

4 This seems to be a formula.

5 Nothing is known about him in other sources nor can a definite date be assigned to his rule, see footnote 13, page 105.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840.

⁷ **ላይንዲንግ** CDF — ⁸ **ላይንዲንግ** A — ⁹ **ላይንዲንግ** E — ¹⁰ **ላይንዲንግ** D

and established in our community. The spiritual gain that is to be expected for those that accomplish them, shall now also those possess who are being directed by them. But particularly we were prepared to come to this petition and supplication through the evil operation of the Satan and through the multitude of the sins of the community ¹³ in these hard and evil times which have happened to us — so that (all) in like manner were sifted in a sieve, and the true brothers were not recognized from the false ones. And the canons became disordered, the laws trodden underfoot, the eternal *geiāmā* ¹⁴ which they had established, was brought to nought, and the first boundaries which the spiritual fathers had established in their heritage, were changed ¹⁵. But even these canons — which were set up, and which have shown to us the way of the light, and the path of life, and which hindered and restrained the slothful and encouraged and stimulated the diligent ones — were concealed and hidden by the evil propensity of the insolent ones. These were

13 The word used here is *ḥay* 'the inside' or 'inner part', metaphorically a body of people in the sense of community.

¹⁴ This term means 'covenant' but can mean also 'oath' and 'vow', *Neshānā*, ed. BEDJAN, p. 579; *Legends*,

ed. WENSINCK I, p. 9. About the importance of the *qeiāmā* and its role in Syrian Christianity, see VÖÖBUS, *Institution of the benai qeiāmā*, p. 19 ff., and *History of Asceticism* I, p. 97 ff.

¹⁵ Cf. Proverbs XXII, 28.

¹⁰ כחצוהו B — ¹¹ lacuna B, אבאשכ F, אבאשכ D
— ¹² כחצוהו BDEF

sought for and not found. Therefore the mind of the prudent¹⁶ ones was moved to seek wisely and to search carefully¹⁷ for the copy of these canons which formerly existed in this community. (Thus) let it be searched for, made known, and come to the midst, and (then) it shall be sanctioned by the signatures and by the seals and be placed in the archive¹⁸ of the school; and it shall be read year after year as the previous custom was, for the stimulation of the virtues and for the shame of the greedy and the idle ones¹⁹, those who in this time use by deception the usurped²⁰ and false name, as they are clothed in the 'eskīmā²¹ of scholarship and of the love of learning, (but) are far from its power, (since) they are drawn after the worldly business and impure profits, and the good name, which we have learned, they defile through the increase of (bitter) tears and through the accumulation of money. And through lightminded²² persons who had set themselves apart for an empty and unprofitable service that is foreign to our 'eskīmā²³, our community was despised

16 The term *κρυία* means 'discerning', 'capable of discernment'. It has a peculiar flavor as an ancient monastic term, see VÖÖBUS, *Zur Terminologie*.

17 Lit. 'clearly'.

18 κῆικ δὲ = τὰ ἀρχεῖα the

public library, the archives.

19 Or 'the empty ones'.

20 Lit. 'borrowed'.

21 'eskimā = σχῆμα,
monastic dress.

22 Lit. 'thin', 'easy'.

²³ See footnote 21.

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 14
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 18
 19

13 **ገመድ** E — 14 **ጸሐፊ** B — 15 **ጸሐፊ** B, **ጸሐፊ** CD, **ጸሐፊ** E —
 16 lacuna B, **ጸሐፊ** CD, **ጸሐፊ** E — 17 **ጸሐፊ** F, **ጸሐፊ**
 lacuna B — 18 lacuna B — 19 lacuna B

and we have been reviled by the members of our own household and the outsiders that dwell in this town.

And matters like these — as our father Mār metropolitan heard and learned, he suffered with us, was grieved because of us, like the brain that is over the body that suffers by the feebleness of sickness of the members in the body, and he ordered us to search diligently for the copies of these previous canons which were set forth and established from the beginning by the Bishop-Metropolitan Mār Hōšē²⁴, (a man of) good remembrance, and Mār Narsai²⁵, presbyter and teacher, and by the approval²⁶ of them by the teachers and brothers who after that time were in this community, through the action (of the fathers) of pious remembrance, Mār

24 Hōšē^c has been mixed up with Elīša^c bar Qūzbāiē, the second director of the School of Nisibis, by CHABOT, *L'école de Nisibe*, p. 51; cf. also *Littérature syriaque*, p. 51; TIXERONT, *Précis de patrologie*, p. paleographically there is a great similiarity between both names in the Syriac script. And since the place of activity was the same for both men, namely Nisibis, such a confusion is no surprise.

25 See page 21 ff.

26 Lit. 'agreement'.

424. This is an obvious mistake. This is the more understandable since

[illegible]

26 add. **KELU** E — 27 **KAK** CEF — 28 **h** F

Also the whole community in one accord consented to the canons which Mār Barṣaumā the bishop set up for them. They did this even in writing and confirmed (them) by their signatures. In these canons, as much as possible we have walked up to now — some of us through the compulsion of necessity and some of us with good will. And because after the departure³⁷ of the holy Mār Barṣaumā the bishop, some of the brothers, who in their will were guided by those that are not proper, became estranged to the purpose of our community as they thought that they become free from the law of censure and from the force of punishment. While, indeed, this was done so by the lightminded³⁸ ones, it became a matter of abuse for the entire community, and gave an opportunity for the outsiders to become offended and for the insiders to be blamed. With the confidence in your kindness³⁹ we have approached (you) and make

37 The year of Barṣaumā's death is not known. It seems that his successor Hōše in 496 could look back on a number of years in his office.

38 Literally the word means 'thin'

or 'easy'.

39 The term means 'sweetness'. About its role in the earliest Syrian terminology, see VÖÖBUS, *Originalsprache der Oden Salomos*, p. 283 f.

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the power of discernment that has been planted in our nature,
 through the care and diligence regarding the chaste discipline of
 our life as we think the thought that is fitting and right for our
 name and our teaching. And further we have awakened and stimu-
 lated our conscience ⁵⁴ to be anxious about these (things) that are
 necessary and required for the true purpose of our calling, as we
 are convinced that the suffering-causing passions all the time accom-
 pany us, these which confuse the conscience ⁵⁵, weaken it for the
 services of the good things as they lead astray and lead us after
 the aberration of the shameful desires, and pillage ⁵⁶ us more than
 the robbers, and take from us the possession of the fear of God.
 Further, the fear of these (things) which continue to harm us every
 day, has terrified us and terrifies us that the weight of the negli-
 gence would not mark ⁵⁷ us as in sleep, and we would stay
 behind and cease from the service of love for the occupation with
 spiritual (values) — that one which we have chosen through the

⁵⁴ Or 'intellect'.

⁵⁶ Lit. 'take spoil'.

⁵⁵ Or 'intellect'.

⁵⁷ Lit. 'stopped'.

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⁵⁴ lacuna A, 𐎠𐎡𐎢 BCE, 𐎠𐎡𐎢 DF — ⁵⁵ lacuna B — ⁵⁶ lacuna B

that of the eternal, there came upon us a gust of a bad whirlwind like that (which came) upon blessed Paul in the midst of the sea ⁶⁰ which also is called the one of the envy and of quarrel, and it disturbed the peace of our conscience ⁶¹ through haughty and deceitful men whose conscience ⁶² of their deceit was concealed in them in the likeness to the rocks which are hidden in the sea and on which the care-free ⁶³ ships unexpectedly are fractured. But more than hard rocks, these envious and haughty ones in their quarrels have stricken the ship of our community until the (whole) structure of our conscience ⁶⁴ was close (to the point) of becoming dissolved. And then suddenly and unexpectedly that voice has inspirited us that has inspirited the disciples in the midst of the sea. And although these haughty ones in the mind of their hearts see our Savior manifestly, they have not ceased and abstained from their contention but in their perturbation are similar to a wild animal, and bait and kick one another like senseless ones and run around the town

⁶⁰ Cf. Acts XXVII, 14.

61 Or 'mind'.

62 Or 'mind'.

63 Lit. 'tranquil', 'calm', 'undisturbed'.

64 Or 'mind'.

[illegible][illegible]

57 $\kappa\lambda\alpha$ E — 58 $\kappa\mu\kappa$ B

howling like dogs, and like those without hope they have abandoned⁶⁵ and have cut off the hope of their life, and they have erased from their mind the power of nature and of the Scriptures — on that account envious men, bitter in soul, that are like to these, have become helpers and auxiliaries for them. And they have helped and supported the evil with all their power and have thrown away and have rejected the good from all their soul.

And when we saw that there was none to support and no one to help, and no one to rebuke nor to correct, and no one to tame the impetuosity of the wildness through the word (then) we turned away and abstained also from the vengeance of the quarrels ⁶⁶ of these insolent ones — as we have seen what the blessed Moses did regarding that company of these of the coterie of Korah ⁶⁷ as he left judgement of their insolence to the Judge of righteousness — therefore we, too, have trod and are treading on that path

65 Lit. 'enfeebled'.

NAU, p. 614 f.

⁶⁶ Cf. BARIHADBESĀBBĀ, *Histoire*, ed.

⁶⁷ Cf. Numeri XVI, 5 ff.

[illegible]

59 **lacuna** BCD, **F** — ⁶⁰ **BE** — ⁶¹ **om.** BF —
62 **BEF**

of humility, on which trod that Humble one, and we have given the judgement regarding the vengeance of these quarrelsome ones that are found among us, to the Messiah, the righteous judge of all the reasonable ones. With regard to this which we have done in writing we have not made mention of their insolence beyond the purpose of the Scriptures. Moreover, we have trodden on the direct path of their words, and we have learned from them that continue to narrate the foolishness of the foolish ones and plait a wreath of praise for the diligent ones as they are convinced that the threat frightens the bad ones and the praise inspirits the good ones. In this respect in their books the image of the memory of the good and bad ones is depicted. There was also among us a memory in writings, admonishing about the service of the good ones, and enlightening the occupation of the bad ones. But it has perished and was destroyed by men envious of excellencies⁶⁸. And there it happened also to us what happened to the book of the blessed Jeremiah the Prophet⁶⁹ : when the wicked King Jehoiakim was not able to endure the hardness of the sentences of the prophecy, the insolent one was daring and

68 Or 'good things'.

⁶⁹ Cf. Jeremiah XXXVI, 23.

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⁶³ ח.כ.ז.ח BCDE — ⁶⁴ ק.ל.מ.נ BC — ⁶⁵ א.ב.ג D

burned them in fire; then the prophet was ordered by God who had given it, that he should return and make his prophecy a second time for the reproof of the king and for the accusation of the people⁷⁰. Something like this, therefore, also we have done in remembrance of our writings — since the first ones were forgotten in the manner of the words of the prophet, we wished to renew the same ones differently. But (by) this ‘differently’ we assert to make a remembrance of them, not contrary to their purpose that has been lost⁷¹. But as the first ones were confirmed through the witnesses of mortal men, and were sealed by the seals of clay of the earth, now, instead of the witnesses of the mortals and the brittle⁷² seals of clay, we confirm them through the three holy names of the substance without beginning : the Father and the Son and the Spirit of Holiness, as we are entrusting our life and our writings to these holy names and to (that) of the mediation of our beginning⁷³. And according to the will of our Creator and our

⁷⁰ Cf. Jeremiah XXXVI, 29 ff.

⁷¹ Lit. 'corrupted'.

⁷² *Meḥablānā* means more exactly 'destroying', 'corrupting'.

73 Or this word could be understood as 'first fruit', cf. I Corinthians XV, 23 : *ἡμεῖς ὡς ἀπαρχὴ τοῦ καρποῦ* 'the Messiah the first fruits'.

[illegible]66 **KUK E**

Renewer we have set up among us also the canons which are profitable and necessary for our correction from this day and on. Everyone of us who becomes a cause for quarrel or strife, and disturbs and annoys the community of his brothers through false pretexts, and then is punished because of his follies, and (then) takes refuge with the men or women or the seculars or the clerics of the town or even seeks somebody as advocate ⁷⁴, except the community to which he belongs, and does not obey the words and the correction offered to him by the whole community of his brothers — this one shall be anathematized from the fellowship of the Messiah, and from the intercourse with the true believers, not by us or by our word, but through the word of the Messiah Himself — that one who has given this authority to the mortals ⁷⁵. And further is anathematized through this word, ruling over every man or woman from whatever class ⁷⁶, who arises and aids the insolent

74 The word also means 'an intercessor'.

75 Cf. Matthew XVIII, 17-18.

76 ~~κατα~~ *tagmā* = τάγμα.

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⁷⁵ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ BE

foreign to the fellowship of the mysteries ⁸¹ of the church and to the enjoyment of good things — those kept for the believers. The judgement of his audacity shall be kept for the great day of the revelation of the Messiah. But we all in one consent have accepted and approved these writings, and confirm them with the motions of our soul and with the members of our bodies.

And everyone of us who opposes, holds in light esteem and does not accept them in love — we have determined about him excommunication ⁸² (namely) with no alteration : that on the day he shows this mind, he shall become foreign to our community, and no one shall have intercourse with him for his shame.

⁸¹ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ *parāzē* more specifically means the Eucharist.

⁸² Lit. 'cutting', here 'excommunication' or 'anathema'.

II

[מנהג]

מנהג מנהג. כוכב דכח ה'ל דנחפ'ז. הנהג. זכח
 א'י' לחפ'ז הנהג דב'. ע'ז כ'ז'ל' ד'ז'כ' חפ'ז
 ד'ל' ד'חפ'ז הנהג ד'ח'. כ'ל'ח'ל'ל' י'ח'פ'ז פ'ז'ח'פ'ז

[CANONS]

The first canon. At the time when it is proper, that the *rabbaitā*¹ should be (set apart) and made known according to the order and custom year by year, with the counsel of our *rabban*², the *mepaš-qānā*³ of the school and with that of the whole community⁴ with

¹ Here the Arabic version departs :
 في الوقت الذي يجب ان يختار خازنا ومدبرا
 'about the time when it is necessary to elect an *ḥa'znā* and a *mudabbir* according to the custom in every year', *Fiqh an-naṣrānīya*, ed. HOENERBACH et SPIES, p. 162.

Although there exists an Arabic form of this Syriac term, it is noteworthy that the Arabic here employs instead the term *ḥa'znā*, 'supervisor', 'inspector'. This is not the usual Arabic equivalent for *rabbaitā*, see BAR BAHLUL, *Lexicon Syriacum*, ed. DUVAL, II, col. 1866; MANNA, *Vocabulaire chaldéen arabe*, p. 715 f. However Bar 'Ali renders it so, Ms. Par. syr. 253, fol. 166 a and Ms. 299, fol. 182 a; cf. Ms. 255, fol. 134 a; see also PAYNE SMITH, *Thesaurus syriacus*, II, col. 3785. The Aramaic ח'ן has made it more popular, וח'ן הכנסת נוטל

ספר תורה ונוטנו לראש הכנסת, Sota VII, 8, fol. 41 a, V, p. 311; cf. Yoma VII, 1.

The second term is the Syriac *medabrānā*, 'leader', cf. footnote 12, page 52. The term should be added to the nomenclature in GRAF, *Verzeichnis arabischer kirchl. Termini*, p. 104.

² Rabban means 'our master', here the director of the school and the head of the community. The system that the *mepašqānā* was also the head of the school was borrowed from the traditions kept in the School of Edessa, BARHADBEŠABBĀ, *Fondation*, ed. SCHER, p. 382.

³ 'Commentator', 'expositor', 'interpreter' or 'exegete', who occupied the most important post in the school called כ'ז'ח'ז'ל' ד'ח'פ'ז 'the chair of interpretation', BARHADREŠABBĀ, *Fondation*, ed. SCHER, p. 390.

⁴ See footnote 13, page 53.

[illegible]¹ ገጠጠ B — ² ቢገጠጠ B — ³ ቢገጠጠ E

one consent they shall elect a reliable person ⁵ who is fitting for the guidance of the community. No one is permitted to stand up and to make a party, quarrel and confusion about something that was right ⁶. And whosoever is found that he does one of these (things), and stands up against the truth and disputes, shall receive punishment. He shall become foreign to the community and the residence in the town.

The second canon. The *rabbaitā*, however, that one who has been elected and entrusted with the guidance of the community, shall not judge by taking favor⁷, and shall not be directed by his own conscience⁸, and shall not proceed⁹ with income and expense of the school without the two or three witnesses. And without the counsel of our *rabban* and that of the outstanding¹⁰ brothers he shall not bring punishment on the offenders, but every act,

ὁ καθ' ἡ parṣūrā = πρόσωπον.

⁶ Lit. 'fair'.

⁷ Lit. 'accepting faces'.

s Or 'mind'.

Here the Arabic version renders the text differently: لا ينبغي ان يحكم بالنفاق: وبشهوته بل بشهادة اثنين وثلاثة 'he shall not judge in falsehood and in his passion but by the testimony of two or

three (witnesses)', *Fiqh an-naṣrānīya*,
ed. HOENERBACH et SPIES, p. 162.

⁹ The Arabic version reads here ولا يظهر, 'and he shall not announce', *op. cit.*, p. 162.

¹⁰ A term used for outstanding and influential members in the monastic communities, see Ms. Dam. Patr. 9/8, cah. 8, fol. 10 b.

[illegible]

11 The word used here is **مخبر** which means a 'mole'. It seems that it metaphorically and graphically refers to the activities of intrigue. However the Arabic text has understood this phrase differently and translates : **ويطوفون الموت** 'and they roam in the houses', *Fiqh an-naṣrānīya*, ed. HOENERBACH et SPIES, p. 162. Yet it must be taken into account that the translator has not rendered the text carefully but has reduced it, giving here only an abridged compilation.

לא יזכר תימנח לא עלהם לחביו לא כחלם דמלפם
 ולא כעזא דגלחא. ספלא סף דלחוב סלחוב.
 זמ דמ דחלחא דמלפם ס דגלחא חלח. זמ ספסלח
 זכא. כחלח לא חסבל. חל חלח דמ דחלח
 ספלא ספסלח דמ דמס ספלא. דלח זמ גלח ס,
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 כחלח לא חסבל. ס דמ חלח לחלח סלח
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and order of the brothers and that of the *rabbaitā* of the school, neither for the cause of the instruction ¹² nor because of a pretense of prayer, also not in order to buy or to sell. Whoever, however, enters on the occasion of instruction or prayer without permission, shall not be received in the community. For the purpose of trade it is not lawful to get permission because it is outside the will of the canons, and is entirely foreign to the occupation of the community. But who, then, dares and enters the country of the Romans to work out a business ¹³, he shall not be received in the community. But if it seems (good) to the *rabbaitā* and to the brothers of the community to grant grace to them while they are not deserving it, because only once they were caught that they trod outside the custom of the community — those who entered because of teaching and prayer shall agree under strict ¹⁴ stipulation that they shall not enter again without permission. And after they receive censure and rebuke which they deserve, they shall be received. From those who entered because of trade shall be taken what they brought from the

¹² Obviously the reason is that schools of the communities and monasteries in the Byzantine territory were regarded as centers for the virus of

13 ~~κλυσία~~ pragmatīā =
πραγματεία.

14 Lit. 'true'.

⁸ **om** B — ⁹ om. D — ¹⁰ om. B — ¹¹ lacuna A, **om** F, **om** BCD
— ¹² **om** B

The fifth canon. No one of the brothers shall practice business ¹⁶ or craft. But if it is necessary ¹⁷ to buy and sell (then) from the month 'Āb ¹⁸ until Tešrī qadīm ¹⁹ outside of Nisibis ²⁰ in other coun-

19 The month of October.

20 Later it was found that this arrangement was not satisfactory and this order was changed. BARHADBESABĀ, *Fondation*, ed. SCHER, p. 397 f., speaks of the fathers who have arranged the work according to two harvest seasons, the harvest of corn and the harvest of the fruit, so that the sessions in the school followed these two seasons.

18 The month of August.

[illegible]

14 לכבוד C

The ninth. In the time, however, of the great *mautbā*³⁰ when they have recited the psalm of the evening, everyone shall go into his cell³¹. And when the cock crows everybody shall come and take (his) place³². The one that was taken from the evening is not valid. Those, however, who come at the cock's crow shall leave one row before the bench³³ to be for the brothers-presbyters, and shall take places in the other row.

²⁶ Lit. 'name' or 'title'.

27 $\kappa\lambda\acute{\alpha}\delta\epsilon\kappa$ = $\sigma\chi\acute{o}\lambda\iota\alpha$ 'students',
'disciples'.

28 Lit. 'reading syllabi'.

29 In the *sī'tā* we have to do with two choirs arranged for antiphonal chanting. 'ABDĪŠŌ', *Nomocanon*, ed. ASSEMANI, p. 274, in connection with the same term describes the canticles which were used, particularly the 'ūnīātā 'response'. These two things, interpretation and chanting appear in the description of Narsai's work, see BARHADBEŠABBĀ, *Fondation*, ed. SCHER, p. 383.

30 **𑀓𑀲𑀭𑀸𑀓** *mautbā* 'a habitation'.

In the liturgical terminology it means a part of a service sung sitting and also a division of the Psalter, see *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, ed. VÖÖBUS, p. 169, 188. Here it means a part of the work of the school that covers the session in the year. Concerning the latter see ‘ABDĪŠŌ, *Nomocanon*, ed. ASSEMANI, p. 273 f. and the Appendix.

³¹ κηλο *gelāitā* = κέλλα.

32 This was the usual practice that study lasted from the morning until evening, see Ms. Mus. Borg. syr. 39, fol. 149 a.

33 *ḥlma* *sapsilā* = subsellium.

III

[Kīiaē]

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[RATIFICATION]

Also we, brothers, in this time of the rule of the peaceful and kind ¹ Khosrau ², king of the kings, under the glorious and upright leadership of the highpriesthood of the holy Mār Paulos ³, the bis-

¹ From that which we know of the situation at that time, we can conclude that it was an epoch marked by favorable conditions. It is reflected in a lively activity in erecting monasteries during the period of the Catholicos Jausep, who ruled from 552 till 566, Eliiā bar Šināiā, Ms. Vat. syr. 520, fol. 214 a - 251 a. Khosrau had, in his peace treaty with the Emperor Justinian in the year 563, given assurance that there would be freedom of religion in his empire, including permission for the erection of buildings, designed for the purpose of the cult, MENANDER, *Fragmenta historica*, ed. DINDORF, II, p. 24.

² This is Khosrau I Anoširvan who ruled from 531 till 579.

³ The chronicle of Mešihāzekā informs us that previously he was a teacher in Hedaiab where he served for about 30 years, *Sources syriaques*, ed. MINGANA, p. 75. That Paulos took part in the theological discussions

with the Emperor Justinian, appears in his report about the deliberations which was sent to Qīswai, a physician at the court, ABŪ ʿL-BARAKĀT, *Miṣbāḥ aṣ-ṣilma*, ed. RIEDEL, p. 652; a letter of Baršaumā, bishop of Šuṣ, sent to Īšōʿiahb I, refers to his trip to the emperor, *Histoire nestorienne*, ed. SCHER, XIII, p. 568, also that of Gīwargī, metropolitan of Moṣul, Ms. Vat. arab. 110, fol. 190 a - 192 b. An evidence appears also in a document of which an excerpt has survived, Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,535, fol. 16 b - 18 b.

The attempt, see MERCATI, *Vita e gli scritti di Paolo*, p. 3 ff., to identify him with Paulos the Persian, described by Junilius Africanus, has found much approbation. Junilius reports: Ad haec ego respondi, vidisse me quendam Paulum nomine, Persam genere, qui in Syrorum schola in Nisibi urbe est edoctus, ubi divina lex per magistros publicos, sicut apud nos in mundanis studiis grammatica

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hop⁴ who in our period is entrusted to shepherd the sheep of the Messiah, and under the supreme and skilful teaching of our fathers and the *rabbānē*⁵, God-loving Mār Abraham⁶, presbyter and *mepašqānā*⁷ of the divine books, and Mār Narsai⁸, deacon and *magreiānā*⁹, — we consent¹⁰ and accept these canons which were set up by our holy fathers¹¹ and entrusted (to us) with a true

et rhetorica, ordine ac regulariter traditur, *Instituta regularia*, ed. MIGNE, col. 15. However all the data conflict with the evidence in the sources, see VÖÖBUS, *School of Nisibis*, chapter V.

Another attempt to identify him with Paulos of Bāšrā who composed a work on the logic of Aristotle, *Logica*, in *Anecdota syriaca*, ed. LAND, IV, p. 1 ff., dedicated to Khosrau, made by Nestle, TLZ I (1876), col. 668 f.; LABOURT, *Christianisme dans l'empire perse*, p. 166, and CHABOT, *Littérature syriacque*, p. 52, is impossible. After the collapse of his aspirations to become metropolitan of Persis, this Paulos abandoned the Christian faith, BAR ʿEBRĀIĀ, *Chronicon eccl.*, ed. ABBELOOS et LAMY, II, col. 97.

⁴ His consecration could not have taken place before Catholicos Abā's return from Bēt Hūzāiē in 551, see ABĀ, *Lettre V*, ed. CHABOT, p. 93;

Tašēitā de-Mār Abā, ed. BEDJAN, p. 269 ff.

It seems that this is the same prelate whose name appears among the signatures given to the acts of the synod held in the year 554 under Catholicos Jausep, *Synodicon orientale*, ed. CHABOT, p. 108.

Paulos died at the time of the conquest of Dārā by the Persians, *Histoire nestorienne*, ed. SCHER, VII, p. 193 ff., i.e. in the year 571.

⁵ The plural form of 'our master', cf. footnote 2, page 73.

⁶ See page 23 ff.

⁷ See footnote 3, page 73.

⁸ Nothing is known about his person.

⁹ See footnote 41, page 83.

¹⁰ Or 'approve'.

¹¹ This statement corrects the assertion made by the Chronicle of Arbēl that ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ 'especial canons' were set up for the *rabbaita*, *Sources syriacques*, ed. MINGANA, p. 73.

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² ܡܚܝܠܡ BE — ³ ܡܚܝܠܡ CEF

stipulation that we do and fulfil all that is written here without resistance and impudence¹².

And whoever is caught that he transgresses one of these laws according to what is written above, in consent we issue judgement over him and no one shall be allowed to help him in any way or (for) any reason.

Confirmed and verified is this book through the Amen¹³ that is not to be deceived.

The canons end (here) which were set up in the days of Mār Hōše¹⁴ and Mār Narsai¹⁵ the teachers of truth.

¹² The Chronicle of Arbēl tells that this necessity was caused by the unrest which had broken out because of bad management of the property of the school, MEŠĪHĀZEKĀ, *Histoire*, ed. MIN-

GANĀ, p. 73.

¹³ Used here as a formula of confirmation or sanction.

¹⁴ See page 55.

¹⁵ See page 21 ff.

IV

ܠܡܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܠܡܥܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ

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FURTHER — OTHER CANONS OF THE SAME SCHOOL

Again (these are) other canons which were set up and laid down in the 12th year of the victory¹ of the merciful² and beneficent³ Hormizd, king of the kings, under the leadership of the watchful

¹ What is meant here is the event of his enthronization in February 579 following Khosrau I. The twelfth year would be 590 A.D.

Although the wording is somewhat strange, it cannot refer to any other event since his rule did not last longer than 12 years.

² Bal'amī eulogizes his actions and claims that his justice surpassed that of Anoširvan, *Chronique*, tr. ZOTENBERG, II, p. 246. Also Hišām ibn Muḥammad, see ṬABARĪ, *Ta'rīḥ ar-rusul*, ed. BARTH, NÖLDEKE, etc. p. 988. However, other sources draw a different picture. Ṭabarī quotes a source according to which he was reckless towards the nobles and the influential people, whom he put into prison and executed them, *ibid.*, p. 990. An anonymous chronicle in Syriac states that a heavy yoke was placed on the nobles and on

all the people, *Chronicon anonymum*, ed. GUIDI, p. 15.

³ Christian sources praise his magnanimity and kindness greater than any other king had offered, *Histoire nestorienne*, ed. SCHER, VII, p. 195; 'AMR, *De patriarchis nest.*, ed. GISMONDI, p. 45. His reply to the Magi reveals his patent sympathy for the Christians, as this is demonstrated by a reliable tradition, see ṬABARĪ, *Ta'rīḥ ar-rusul*, ed. BARTH, NÖLDEKE etc., p. 990 f. These sentiments of gratitude are reflected in the synodical acts composed under Īšō'iahb I, *Synodicon orientale*, ed. CHABOT, p. 130.

However we hear of the churches which were destroyed under Hormizd's rule, PETROS, *Taš'itā de-Mār Sabrīšō'*, ed. BEDJAN, p. 306. These actions must have been the result of the initiative of the local authorities.

1. $\frac{1}{2} D$

The first canon. The 'akscnādākrā¹³ who is in the xenodocheion¹⁴ of the school shall carefully provide for the brothers that have become sick, and nothing shall be lacking in the (things) required for their nourishment and their cure; and further he shall not

¹⁴ ἡμεῖς ’aksānādāukīn =
ξενοδοχεῖον ‘a hospital’.

¹¹ canon om. E — ¹² canon om. E

The sixth. Those brothers who leave the school before completion, or when being in it, are found that they are outside the firm rules³³ and lawful life with the brothers — when they die, shall not share in the law of the community³⁴ of the school. They shall, however, have more honor than a secular, — if it seems to the *rabbaitā* and to the brothers of the school that this person³⁵ deserves it.

30 Lit. 'known'.

33 Or 'stable life'.

³⁴ See footnote 13, page 53.

³⁵ See footnote 5, page 74.

³⁶ See footnote 15, page 93.

37 Lit. 'holding'.

38 Lit. 'acquaintance', 'intimacy', 'relation'.

³² See footnote 31, page 79.

²⁵ lacuna B — ²⁶ canon om. E — ²⁷ lacuna BCD

The eighteenth. No one of the brothers of the school is allowed to teach the women, *benat qeiāmā* ⁵⁸ from the town or outside the town under the pretext ⁵⁹ of the right cause ⁶⁰, also no one shall have continuance of talk ⁶¹ and prolonged conversation with women, in order that there may come no offence and blasphemy through this cause. And when he is found that he acts otherwise, he shall be foreign to the community and go from the town.

The nineteenth. The brothers who have come because of instruction, are not allowed to live together with the physicians ⁶² in order

⁵⁹ See footnote 24, page 94.

60 Lit. 'righteousness'.

62 This canon shows that the students of medicine were not held in a high esteem in the school.

About this institution and its history, see VÖÖBUS, *Celibacy*, p. 33 ff.; ID. *Institution of the benai qeiāmā*, p. 21 ff.

V

[Kīiax]

ܡܠܟܐ ܟܠܡܝܬܐ ܡܪܝܬܐ ¹ ܟܝܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܟܠܡܐ

¹ ܟܝܝܬܐ BCDE

[RATIFICATION]

In this 13th year ¹ of the victory ² of the merciful and beneficent ³

¹ According to the chronological calculations the year would be 602 A.D.

² What is meant here are the events of the year 590 which brought Khosrau Parvez to the throne. The aspirations of Vahram, military commander of Hyrcania and Khorasan, to the throne, were frustrated by the nobility which hated Hormizd and was ready to sacrifice him but wanted to salvage the dynasty and therefore proclaimed his son Khosrau as the new king. However only the military help given him by Emperor Maurice finally secured victory over the rebellion, *Chronicon anonymum*, ed. GUIDI, p. 15 f.

³ Christians had many reasons to use such epithets. According to Bar ʿEBRĀIĀ, *Chronicon syr.*, ed. BRUNS et KIRSCH, p. 97 in his liberality he built churches for Širin and also a monastery, *Tašʿitā de-Mār Sabrīšōʿ*, ed. BEDJAN, p. 306. He made donations to the Christian institutions, *ὁ δὲ τοῦ Ῥωμαϊκοῦ βασιλεὺς σωματοφύλακας εἰς Χοσρόην ἐξέπεμπεν · εἰς νοῦν τοίνυν*

βαλόμενος ὁ τῶν Περσῶν βασιλεὺς τὴν ἄνωθεν αὐτῷ τῆς ἐπικουρίας γεγονυῖαν ῥοπήν, τῷ ἐν μάρτυσιν ἐπιφανεστάτῳ Σεργίῳ σταυρὸν ἐκ χρυσοῦ πεποιημένον, λιθοκόλλητον, δῶρον ἐξέπεμπεν, ὃν δῆτα Χοσρόης ὁ Καβάδου τὸ ἄστυ παραστησάμενος, λαφυραγωγῆσας, ἐν τοῖς τῶν Περσῶν ἀνακτόροις ἀπέθετο, ἔτι τὸ Ῥωμαϊκὸν σκῆπτρον Ἰουστινιανοῦ τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος ἐπιβαίνοντες, THEOPHYLACTUS, *Historia* V, 13, 14, ed. BEKKER, p. 229 f. He also gave his permission to erect cult-buildings wherever Christians wished to build, AL-THAʿĀLIBĪ, *Histoire*, ed. ZOTENBERG, p. 671.

The sources speak of a vigorous building-activity that took place at that time. Many ruins of the sanctuaries were restored, and many new churches and monasteries were erected, PETROS, *Tašʿitā de-Mār Sabrīšōʿ*, ed. BEDJAN, p. 306 f. Particularly outstanding is the role of Jazdīn, a Christian dignitary at the court, who lives forth in the tradition as a great benefactor, *Chronicon anonymum*, ed. GUIDI, p. 23.

² ~~ḥḥ~~ E — ³ lacuna A, ~~ḥḥ~~ BCDE, ~~ḥḥ~~ F — ⁴ ~~ḥḥ~~ B
— ⁵ ~~ḥḥ~~ B, lacuna CD ~~ḥḥ~~ E — ⁶ ~~ḥḥ~~ BCDE

And we, the outstanding and the *badūqā*⁹ brothers, whose names are written besides our seals for the indication of our agreement with

⁹ See footnote 7, page 52.

APPENDIX

1. THE TEXT OF 'ABDĪŠŌ'

۱. حقہ لک ۱. لک و لک

رتب² الملافنه ان يقرا في السنة

[illegible]

الاولى بعد احد.....³ ان كان

في الاسكول خبزا ومن بعد احد

.... ان کانوا محتاجون ان يجمعوا

لنفوسهم القوت

وتكون الكتابة في هذه السنة

الجزء الاول من.....وكتاب فولوس

Of the School of Nisibis

In the first year if there is bread in the school the *mautbā* ⁴ shall be the second week that is after the Sunday 'After Thy burial'; and if there is no bread in the school and the students have the need to eat from their labors, the second week that is after the Sunday 'Not from the living'.

The first year they shall write the first part of the *bēt*

The teachers have ordered that in the first year it will be read after the Sunday... ⁵ if there is bread in the school; and after the Sunday... if the students are compelled to take care of the livelihood for themselves.

The extent for writing in this year is the first part of... and

¹ 'ABDĪŠŌ', *Nomocanon*, ed. ASSEMANI, p. 273 f.

² IBN AT-ṬAIYIB, *Fiqh an-naṣrānīya*,
ed. HOENERBACH et SPIES, II, p. 161 f.

³ The manuscript has gaps here.

4 The word means 'a habitation' but here it means the period when the school was in session.

⁵ Unfortunately the text has several lacunae.

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*mautbē*⁶, the book of Paul and
the Torah.

The one who teaches the
chanting⁷ shall teach together
with the lections of the table⁸
the funeral hymns⁹.

But in the second year they
shall write the second part of
the *bēt mautbē* and David and
the prophets; and together with
the table of lections they shall
learn the *‘ūniātā*¹⁰ of the Mys-
teries¹¹.

In the third year the third
part of the *bēt mautbē* and the

⁶ *bēt mautbē* is a liturgical term
and means a part of a service sung
sitting or a division of the Psalms,
or prayers repeated between the
Psalms.

⁷ The Syriac word means ‘com-
pany’; here it is used in the sense of
‘choir’.

⁸ A more ordinary form of this
phrase appears in the following sen-

والتوراة وسليح اليشع.....

وفي السنة الثانية يكتب الجزء
الثاني..... وداود والانبياء
ويلبّخ عنايى الرازين

وفي اسنة الثالثة يقرأ الجزء الثالث

the book of Paul, the Torah,
and Prophet Elisha.

In the second year the second
part will be written... and David,
the prophets and the *‘ūniātā* of
the Mysteries will be taught.

In the third year the third
part of the *mautbā* will be read

tence as ‘the table of lections’.

⁹ The word means actually ‘depart-
ed’, ‘defunct’. What is meant here
are the liturgical parts in the funeral
service.

¹⁰ The *‘ūniātā* are the ‘chants’ and
‘responses’, alternate verses sung by
the choir.

¹¹ These are the *‘ūniātā* of the
eucharistic liturgy.

من بثمرتبا والاحداثا ويلبّخ العنايين
 ومع اللباخة يقرى الالواح
 يقرأ الاحداث كلهم مزامير داوود وكتاب الاحداثا والقرايين
 التى يقرأ فى الأحاد والأعياد والذكارين ومن يختار منهم
 للكهنوت يقرأ من بعد الصورة والتفسير المختصر الذى لمار افرام
 والطويل الذى لمار تاذورس ومن يختار للطب ينفذ الى البيمارستان
 وبالجملة جميع اولاد النصارى قبل تسليمهم فى الصنائع يقرون الداوود
 والحديثه وفلاكيث القرايين

book of the New Testament, and
 together with the table of lections
 they shall learn the 'ūniātā.

and the New Testament, the
 'ūniātā will be taught, and to-
 gether with the instruction the
 tables will be read.

All the younger ones read the
 Psalms of David, the books of the New Testament and the lessons
 which are read on Sundays, feast- and commemoration-days; who
 ever among them is set apart for the priesthood, has to read besides
 the text also a short commentary by Mār Ephrēm and a long one
 by Mār Theodore; and who ever is set apart for the study of
 medicine will be sent to the hospital.

In short — all children of Christians before their introduction
 to professional training, shall read David, the New Testament and
 the sections of the lessons.

2. ANALYSIS

'Abdīšō's claim is that this is a text which belongs to the tradi-
 tions of the School of Nisibis. If so then another piece of the
 legislation has come down to us. However, such a claim must be
 submitted to examination.

There are some disquieting signs already in the history of the
 transmission of this text. While 'Abdīšō' puts boldly 'Of the School

provisions were made for an extraordinary situation when it was not able to feed them. It is clear that in the light of the statutes of the School of Nisibis, this was not the practice there. We are left with the impression that instruction in the School of Nisibis was free, but the students had to take care of their livelihood¹⁶.

Finally, if the plus in the Arabic recension of this text stems from the same source, a new feature emerges which complicates the situation. This conjures up a situation which is different from all we know of the basic works used in the discipline of biblical exegesis. However much remains in darkness, but one thing is certain — there was no symbiosis of the exegetical works of Ephrēm and Theodore of Mopsuestia in the instruction. Already in the School of Edessa the commentaries of Ephrēm were replaced by those of Theodore¹⁷, and in the School of Nisibis Theodore's works were used as normative, and their author was regarded as the 'Interpreter'¹⁸.

¹⁶ See page 77 f., 93 f., 97.

¹⁷ BARHADBEŠABBĀ, *Fondation*, ed. SCHER, p. 382.

¹⁸ See VÖÖBUS, *School of Nisibis*, chapter V, 2 and VIII, 3, particularly III, 15.

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